

***The Journal of Pedagogic Development* <http://www.beds.ac.uk/learning/support/jpd>  
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**About the *JPD***

The *JPD* is published three times a year, in March, July and November, in hard copy and online. The first issue was launched in July 2011 at the annual University of Bedfordshire conference. For each issue we try to publish approximately 50% internal UoB staff contributions and 50% from any other country in the world. (The only continent that has not made a submission is Antarctica!) The *JPD* is developed in the Centre for Learning Excellence at the University of Bedfordshire.

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**Guidelines**

If you are interested in contributing to the *Journal of Pedagogic Development*, please feel free to contact the Editors for Guidelines or for general queries. Submissions are particularly encouraged from colleagues who publish infrequently or have never published. For example, are you involved in a pedagogic project and would like to offer or ask for assistance? If so, please send in a piece about your project. Similarly, if you would like to review a project or a piece of research, we would like to hear from you. Reviews of recently-published books are also invited, as are reviews of pedagogic journals (subject-specific or otherwise). We like to publish a short piece on a Key Academic Thinker in each issue, and again we invite your contributions

on someone who has influenced you. (These pieces need not always be positive in tone, of course: the influence might have been negative!) Finally, we are open to interviews with pedagogic thinkers or practitioners, and correspondence is always welcome.

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**Opinions**

The opinions expressed in any piece herein are those of the writer(s) in question. They are not necessarily the opinions of the editors of this journal, the CLE, or the University of Bedfordshire.

**Writing Retreat 2014**

Writing Retreats are aimed at refining papers for external publication. These could be developments of articles published in the *JPD* or completely new pieces. As with publishing in the *JPD*, the focus should be on teaching and/or learning and/or assessment. The expectation is that your article will be submitted for external publication at the end of the Writing Retreat.

The 2013 Writing Retreat took place at the Hitchin Priory, 3-5 April. A report is available at [www.beds.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/186406/The-Writing-Retreat.pdf](http://www.beds.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/186406/The-Writing-Retreat.pdf).

If you are interested in taking part in the 2014 retreat, or in writing workshops in general that take place throughout the year, please send an abstract for the paper that you would like to write to Andrea Raiker **and** David Mathew.

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## Guest Editorial: The Point of Learning Development

John Hilsdon, co-editor of the *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*, Plymouth University

It was an honour to be invited to be a guest editor at the April 2013 Writing Retreat organised by the Centre for Learning Excellence at the University of Bedfordshire. I found the event both enjoyable and stimulating; furthermore, it enabled me to reconnect with myself as a writer in a way that I had not been able to do for some time. The organisers, David Mathew and Andrea Raiker, also asked me to contribute a guest editorial to this journal. After the retreat was over, back at my desk and embroiled in the day-to-day activities of work, I found it very difficult to make space for any writing other than that of the largely functional and 'transactional' kind demanded by my job as Head of Learning Support and Wellbeing at Plymouth University – i.e. the seemingly endless email correspondence; the completion of forms for budgetary or HR-related purposes; the drafting of somewhat formulaic reports, business cases and so on. Despite having moved from teaching to a largely managerial role in recent years, I still think of myself as an academic and an educator – but in particular I identify myself as a 'learning developer' and it is this aspect of my work that I decided to focus on for my guest editorial.

Having time on the retreat to concentrate on more expressive and reflective writing about academic work was, in some ways, an unsettling and disruptive experience. This kind of writing calls for a focus on the expression and articulation of meaning; it requires attempts at self-explanation, interpretation and justification in what feels like a searching internal dialogue. In order to develop writing of this kind it is not enough to be coherent and comprehensible; it is also necessary to have a point to make – a purpose that (at least some) readers will be willing and able to follow. Thrown into the silence of writing time and limited to my internal(ised) resources, I had to come back to fundamental questions about who I am and what I am doing – and why on earth anyone else might be interested in that. Writing and publishing remain important activities for me as I am also a student (in my spare time) undertaking a doctorate in education, and the notion of 'learning development' (LD) and its role in higher education underpins my doctoral study.

Our world is one of constant and rapid change, in which technological developments seem to offer endless new and life-enhancing possibilities whilst, by contrast and simultaneously, threats to our environment from human activities and associated economic upheavals presage a future for today's students and young people with much less certainty about 'progress' than was felt in my generation. Indeed, the threats of environmental degradation, economic inequality and political violence in many parts of the globe seem likely to condemn millions more each year to lives of poverty, unemployment and conflict. Being an academic was ever an occupation whose usefulness is viewed by those

in the 'practical' worlds of commerce and industry with a degree of suspicion or quizzical scepticism, yet we who love and believe in universities understand the vital importance of knowledge-creating communities, where the emphasis is on learning, collegiality and research to make sense of, and participate meaningfully in our worlds – with the aim of sustaining and enhancing human society, despite the enormous challenges referred to above. This takes me back to the notion of 'learning development' and why I am so passionate about this approach to higher education.

The roles fulfilled by those who adopt the term LD are described in a number of ways in universities in the UK and other English speaking countries: study skills; learner support; academic advice; and key skills tutoring among others. The point of the LD model as I see it, however, is that is not just about additional support for struggling students, a 'service' that is a kind of 'side-show' of university life – rather, it is a distinctive, emerging methodology for 'doing' higher education – it describes an approach to working *alongside* students to achieve their best in their university studies. This notion of being alongside, and its implications for HE practice, deserves some more attention.

Traditional views of HE assume the need for students to enter university with a high degree of academic literacy or 'readiness' to study. It was expected that students would be able to engage with essay writing, critical thinking and the rigours of reading and interpreting textbooks and research papers in their subjects of study. The moves to widen access to higher education over the past forty years, and to transform universities from largely elite to more democratic institutions, has naturally resulted in significant challenges to traditional ways of doing things in academic life. The emergence of a field of professional practice concerned specifically with supporting learning – a field that growing numbers of us now call Learning Development – has been one of the responses to these changes.

The roots of this transformation and massive growth of our universities go back to the idea of widening access and participation in HE, from the tiny proportion of school leavers (about 7%) who attended in the 60s, to more than 40% in recent years. The Robbins Report in the 1960s set things moving in that direction – but it was a government paper in the 1980s (UGC, 1984) that came up with the enlightened principle that university should be open to all with *the ability to benefit* from Higher Education.

In the early years of expansion, as the polytechnics became the 'post 92' universities, jobs created in the LD field were often seen as temporary additions to staffing with 'remedial' functions. Such posts were created using funding provided for widening participation initiatives.

Even at that time, however, there were some far-sighted colleagues, such as Stella Cotterell and David Gosling at the University of East London, who recognised that the changes needed in HE were not to remediate deficient students, but rather to address how the whole university system worked. If we were indeed to have an HE sector open to all with the ability to benefit, changes would be required at all levels — we needed to address admissions, induction, progression routes and modes of assessment — but even more fundamentally, approaches to teaching and learning and curriculum development needed attention.

As the social model of disability shows, promoting inclusivity is not about how disabled individuals need to adapt to a society designed for the able-bodied, but how society itself needs to change to meet the needs of all its members. In the same way, promoting widening participation in HE means ensuring that courses, assessment modes and academic practices themselves do not unfairly disadvantage the non-traditional students. This is not a matter of 'dumbing down' or lowering standards but about ensuring standards are appropriate, criteria for assessment and success are transparent, and that support is provided where needed in order that we take advantage of, and receive the social and intellectual benefits from the full participation of all our students. For example, this means enabling those from working-class backgrounds and those for whom English is not a first language to participate in learning activities on a more level playing field. Conventions of academic life that may have seemed clear to traditional HE students, such as notions of academic referencing, critical thinking and formal styles of writing in English, need to be made transparent and/or adapted for the wider range of students attending university in contemporary times.

This is the context in which a group of learning support professionals, of which I was one, began promoting the notion of Learning Development (LD) in the early 'noughties'. First, an email discussion list was set up — the Learning Development in Higher Education Network (LDHEN — see <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?AO=LDHEN>), and such was the level of interest generated that an annual conference was soon established, followed in 2007 by the launch of ALDinHE, a professional association for LDers (<http://www.aldinhe.ac.uk>) and the Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education (the JLDHE — see <http://www.aldinhe.ac.uk/ojs>).

Eleven years ago, in 2002, this LD network did not exist. The term 'Learning Development' itself was hardly known. In fact, one of the first people to use the phrase was the aforementioned Stella Cotterell, now at Leeds University. Back in the mid-90s, she and colleagues at the University of East London started talking about Learning Development to indicate an approach that differed from 'study skills' or 'learning support' (where the emphasis was on remediating deficient students) in order to emphasise that learning and development was also needed on the part of HE institutions, teaching

practices and the curriculum — it was a call for changes that we are still working for today. LD professionals therefore need to work with academics as well as with students to promote a more participative HE. In this model students are co-creators of knowledge and their role as researchers, including at undergraduate level, is also supported and promoted.

A recent article in the Times Higher (30<sup>th</sup> May 2013) by Graham Gibbs, professor of higher education at the University of Winchester, indicates the extent to which these questions remain both live and act as highly relevant reminders of the point of LD. Gibbs asks what 'study skills' consist of and whether they can actually be learned by students. *'Giving students "how-to" guides to learning'* he argues *'does not encourage the kind of flexible thinking that is required to get the most out of higher education'*. Gibbs rightly goes on to point out that learning at university is not about acquiring a set of discrete skills; and that, in fact such skills cannot easily be learned out of context of the discipline, and then transferred to other situations. For this reason he promotes *'metacognitive awareness and control'*, for learning about learning as *'...the most influential of all aspects of "study skills"'*. *Improving students appears to involve raising their awareness of what they are doing.'*

Whilst I think he has a good point about the ineffectiveness of much that goes under the banner of study skills, Gibbs' alternative — the concern with metacognition — risks locating the 'problem' at the level of the individual unless it is seen through the lens of the social structure — including the power relations — of university life, as exemplified in the discourses and practices of subject disciplines. It is aspects of academic culture — the 'how we do things around here' of university life — that is most likely to affect inclusion or exclusion, success or failure, or to advantage or disadvantage certain groups of students. An LD approach therefore suggests that we need to concentrate more on the ways in which students can fully participate in university life in the context of their studies than on sending them off to consider their thinking skills as individuals. Wenger's notion of 'legitimate' participation (from his work on Communities of Practice) is vital here. To really *legitimate* (used as a verb here) students' participation — and to move toward genuine partnerships in learning and research — means to offer a 'space' at university (drawing upon Bhaba's (1994) notion of 'Third Space') where the language and social practices of incoming students can be used as a platform for them to examine, learn about, and then progressively take ownership of the language and social practices of the disciplines they are drawn to study. In practical terms this means promoting initiatives such as peer-learning schemes; critical thinking workshops; and language awareness activities within subject groups and contexts as well as in 'standalone' provision — and preferably involving both subject specialist academics as well as LD staff working *alongside* students. This approach presents Learning Development professionals, and any academic who also adopts this approach, with a unique and powerful mediating role — one where we

empower learners from all backgrounds to try out their ability to benefit from HE – and so to research and create new knowledge for the benefit of us all.

In bringing these thoughts to a conclusion I would like to thank the *JPD* editors again for giving me this opportunity to write a reflective piece. The process of writing it has given me a chance to nurture the idea that a Learning Development approach can be summarised by the concept of working *alongside* others. What I will

take away from this writing experience is a new commitment for my own studies, to look into the implications of 'alongsideness' for epistemology, research practice and pedagogy.

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## Stress levels and their risk/protective factors among MSc Public Health students

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### Abstract

There is increasing evidence that university students are particularly susceptible to feelings of stress. Given that many post-graduate healthcare students work with patients, the negative outcomes associated with feelings of stress may also impact upon the patient population. This study investigated the prevalence and risk/protective factors of self-perceived stress among 43 international public health post-graduate students. Results revealed that almost all participants scored in either the moderate or high stress level category, with South-Asian students scoring particularly high stress scores. Headache frequency, sleep duration and feeling the need for a holiday were the explanatory variables most strongly associated with stress. The results support and add to previous literature which suggests that international students are particularly susceptible to feelings of stress. Suggestions on the management and prevention of stress are proposed, while ideas for future research to build upon this study's findings are considered.

**Keywords:** Stress, mental health, international, post-graduate, public health students

### Introduction

There is a growing evidence base which suggests that high levels of stress are particularly prevalent among university students. For example, Adlaf *et al.* (2001) found that the stress levels among Canadian university students significantly exceeded the stress levels among the general Canadian population. Perceived stress has been correlated to a number of unhealthy behaviours among university students, such as substance abuse (Park *et al.* 2004), poor psychological health (Bovier *et al.* 2004; Zhang *et al.* 2012), poor physical health (Bitnner *et al.* 2011), reduced social involvement (O'Brien *et al.* 2008) and poor academic performance (Sanders & Lushington 2002).

Public health students and other healthcare students are susceptible to the same problems that other students face, including burnout, pressure to succeed, financial concerns, and feeling isolated from home. However,

given that many of these students are either currently healthcare professionals or will be at some point in the future, we need to ensure that this workforce is able to practise safely and competently. The existence of mental health problems among healthcare staff jeopardises this and may also lead to risks for their patients.

Therefore, the aim of this small scale study was to measure the levels of perceived stress among MSc Public Health students. A secondary aim was to investigate various potential risk/protective factors of stress in order to form recommendations about coping strategies and to provide a basis for the direction of future research.

### Methods

#### Sample

The sample comprised two MSc Public Health student cohorts who were voluntarily attending an SPSS workshop designed to assist with their dissertation's quantitative data analysis. The workshop was run in July 2011 (for the October 2010 taught student cohort) and again in July 2012 (for the October 2011 taught student cohort). On both occasions the workshops took place in the Psychology Data Analysis Laboratory located at the University of Bedfordshire's Park Square campus.

#### Measures

The study's outcome measure was the 'Stress Questionnaire' (International Stress Management Association, 2012). This questionnaire consists of 25 statements to which participants can either respond 'yes' or 'no'. By answering 'yes' to a particular statement, one 'stress point' is accrued. The questionnaire classifies participants who accrue a total between 14 and 25 stress points as having entered the 'high stress' threshold. As such, they are particularly prone to stress and stress-related illness, and should seek professional help and/or stress management counselling. Participants who accrue 5-13 stress points fall within the 'moderate stress' threshold and are likely to experience stress-related ill health and would benefit from stress management counselling. Accruing 4 stress

points or fewer places participants in the 'low stress' category. Such people are considered the least likely to suffer from stress-related illness.

The following socio-demographic and background data were also collected: age, ethnicity, sex, cohort (October or February), the number of hours spent working (including studying) in the past week, the number of 'free time' hours in the past week, the number of headaches experienced in the past month, the level of calm associated with their studies (0 = not calm at all; 100 = completely calm), how much participants feel they need a holiday (0 = I do not currently need a holiday at all; 100 = I am currently in desperate need of a holiday), whether they sleep at least 8 hours per day (yes or no), whether participants consider themselves as someone who generally worries a lot (yes or no), number of very close friends, whether participants are satisfied with their personal study environment (yes or no), whether participants are satisfied with their diets (yes or no), how often participants find time to exercise (never/very occasionally, sometimes/often), whether participants have pets or not (yes or no), preference for tea or coffee, and whether they work more effectively in the morning or evening.

#### Procedure

During the workshops, students were asked to complete an anonymised online questionnaire (created using the online survey software 'Qualtrics'). The data were then immediately pooled into an IBM SPSS 19 database and distributed to the workshop students. These students then used the dataset as a learning tool (including learning more about the SPSS database environment and how to run various statistical tests). A week after the end of the July 2012 SPSS workshop, all attending workshop students were emailed to enquire whether they would be happy to provide their retrospective informed consent to having their questionnaire being used as part of this study. An announcement was also created on the University's virtual learning environment, which provided the same message.

#### Data analysis

All descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were run using IBM SPSS (version 19). Responses to the Stress Questionnaire's 25 statements were summed to calculate a total stress score. Given the nature and size of the sample, non-parametric Mann-Whitney U tests of association were carried out using binary independent variables and the study's dependent variable which contained continuous data. Independent variables with continuous data were categorised into binary variables using median cut-off values.

#### Results

Forty-three students attended the SPSS workshops (21 students attended the SPSS workshop in July 2011, and 22 attended in July 2012), all of whom provided their retrospective informed consent. Nineteen were males (44%), 24 were females (56%), and the median participant age was 28 years (minimum = 23 years, maximum = 45 years). Ten students described their

ethnicity as South Asian (23%), 30 described themselves as African (70%), 2 were Greek (5%) and 1 participant described their ethnicity as British (2%). Thirty-four of the participants were from the October cohort (79%) and 9 were from the February cohort (21%). Please see Table 1 for a full breakdown of all socio-demographic and background descriptive data.

The median Stress Questionnaire score across the group was 12 (minimum reported score = 4, maximum reported score = 21). As figure 1 displays, only 1 student scored in the 'low stress' category, while 25 (58%) scored in the 'moderate stress' category, and 14 (33%) scored in the 'high stress' category.

As can be seen in Table 2, students who classified themselves as 'worriers' scored the highest median stress score, followed by those who reported sleeping less than 8 hours a day, students unsatisfied with their personal study environment, and students who described their ethnicity as South Asian. As can be seen in Table 3, strong significant differences in stress scores were revealed within the sleep length, holiday need, and headache frequency variables. Weaker but nevertheless meaningful differences in stress scores were found within the ethnicity (African vs. South Asians) and in relation to the question, 'Are you a worrier?'

#### Discussion

The results revealed that the SPSS workshop participants, in general, experienced a moderate-high level of stress. This is a worrying finding given the range of negative consequences that stress has for mental and physical health. It is therefore not surprising that higher stress strongly associated with headache frequency, sleep duration and holiday need. These findings also support previous research; Lund *et al.* (2010) found that stress levels strongly predicted sleep quality in a sample of 1,125 American high school students, while Nuallong (2011) reported that stress levels were strongly associated with headache frequency among 183 Thai medical students. Both Koh *et al.* (2012) and Cohen *et al.* (2000) have reported that stress levels among medical students are significantly lower after a holiday period. It is also unsurprising that the students who described themselves as 'worriers' scored significantly higher stress scores than 'non-worriers'. The association between worrying and stress is well documented. For example, Chung & Lee (2012), who surveyed 430 Korean university students, have also found that 'worrying about academic achievements' strongly correlated with higher stress scores. Szabó's (2011) cross-sectional study of 126 Australian university students revealed that worrying has a unique positive association with stress, significantly over and above the associations that both anxiety and depression have with stress.

Particularly concerning was that a third of the sample's scores crossed into the 'high levels of stress' threshold. This is a higher level than what is reported in most other previous research studies investigating university students' mental health. For example, Backović *et al.* (2012), who surveyed 670 home-based Serbian medical

students in their fifth and sixth year, found that high stress levels were associated with 14.2% of the sample. Andrews & Wildig (2004) revealed that 20% of 351 UK-based undergraduates in their second year reported clinically significant anxiety levels. Amr *et al.* (2008)'s cross-sectional study of 311 home-based Egyptian medical students found that 20.3% felt highly stressed. Bewick *et al.* (2008), who surveyed 1,124 students from four UK higher education institutions, found that 29% of students held clinical levels of psychological distress – a similar level but nonetheless lower than in this study. The most obvious interpretation for such high stress scores reported in this study is that international post-graduate students may be particularly susceptible to the stresses associated with student life. International students have to cope with not only all of the regular stresses of student life but also the weight associated with adjusting to life in a new host culture (Mathew & Sapsed, 2012). In many cases they must deal with these burdens without the same level of support that their family, friends and community would ordinarily provide in their native countries. Interestingly, this study's South Asian international students produced considerably higher stress scores than their African counterparts (a difference which was close to being significant). The implication here is that African international students cope with the demands of student life and acculturation more effectively than South Asian students. The validity of this finding, and the reasons for it, clearly require further investigation.

## Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that a substantial proportion of MSc Public Health students experience a high level of stress. They also suggest that international students are particularly susceptible to the burdens of student life, perhaps more so than home-based students. Therefore, effective measures which prevent high levels of stress from developing during the course need to be ascertained. This study's findings strongly suggest that we should, at a minimum, re-emphasise the importance of sleeping well and making good use of holiday time during the course. Suggesting methods of controlling and managing feelings of worry may also be useful; indeed, there are many effective cognitive-behavioural therapy self-help techniques available to draw from that can be recommended to students. Students should also be regularly reminded of the range of student support services available to them if they are feeling stressed. To limit the impact that stigma may have on the uptake of these services, it must be made very clear that university support services take confidentiality very seriously, and are used to supporting culturally and ethnically diverse students. However, given the small sample size, the sampling biases, and the uncertainty associated with the Stress Questionnaire's level of validity, this study's findings and their interpretations should be treated with caution. Direction of causality also cannot be determined due to the cross-sectional research design. Clearly, future methodologically rigorous research is necessary to follow up and investigate this study's findings further. A study which investigates whether and why African

international students cope better with student life than South Asian international students is particularly welcome. Such future research is vital towards furthering our knowledge on how an unhealthy level of stress can be avoided. This is an important objective as by doing so, the range of damaging mental and physical consequences for student health can be minimised.

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**Table 1: Descriptive statistics associated with background variables/questions**

Background variable/question		N	%	Median	Mean (SD)
Age				28	28.6 (4.2)
Sex	Male	19	44		
	Female	24	56		
Ethnicity	South Asian	10	23		
	African	30	70		
	British	1	2		
	Greek	2	5		
Cohort	October	34	79		
	February	9	21		
Workshop	July 2011	21	49		
	July 2012	22	51		
Hours spent working in past week				20	30.6 (21.1)
Hours of free time in past week				24	26.7 (18.4)
Exercise frequency	Never/very occasionally	16	37		
	Sometimes/often	27	63		
Are you a worrier?	Yes	13	30		
	No	30	70		
Number of close friends				3	3 (1.8)
Satisfied with personal study environment?	Yes	37	86		
	No	6	14		
Satisfied with diet?	Yes	31	72		
	No	12	28		
Number of headaches in past month				2	3.1 (3.7)
Pet owner?	Yes	1	2		
	No	42	98		
Level of calm associated with studies				70	62.9 (28.5)
Level of holiday need				80	71.9 (31.5)
Do you usually sleep $\geq 8$ hours per day?	Yes	25	58		
	No	18	41		
Coffee or tea preference	Coffee	17	40		
	Tea	26	60		
Morning or evening work preference	Morning	21	49		
	Evening	22	51		

**Table 2: Cross-tabulation of background variables/questions with Stress Questionnaire median and mean scores**

Background variable/question		Stress median	Stress mean (SD)
All participants		12	11.6 (4.3)
Age*	<28 years	11	11.4 (4.2)
	$\geq 28$ years	12	11.7 (4.7)
Sex	Male	10	10.7 (4.8)



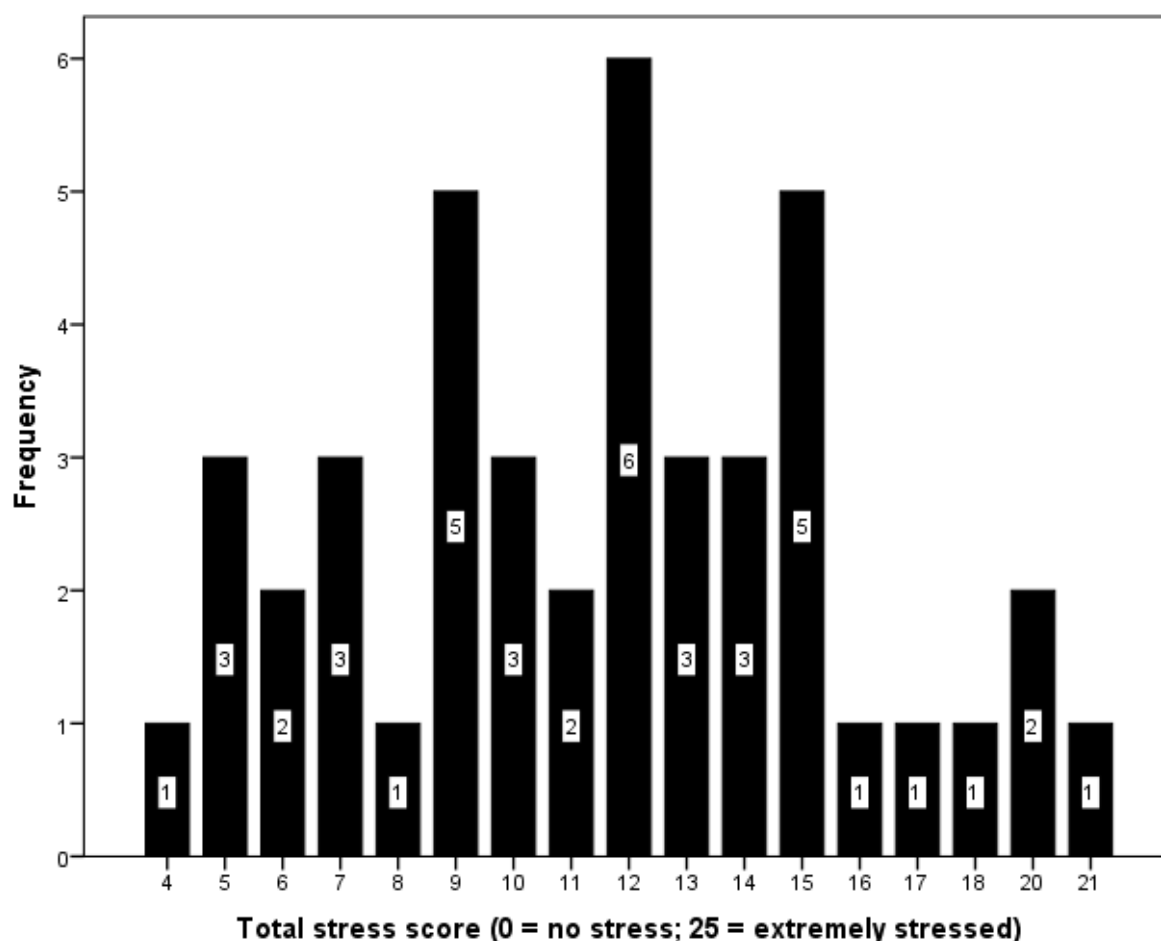
	Female	12	12.2 (3.8)
Ethnicity	South Asian	13.5	13.6 (4.4)
	African	10.5	10.6 (4.2)
Cohort	October	11.5	11.3 (4.1)
	February	13	12.7 (5.2)
Workshop	July 2011	12	11.4 (4)
	July 2012	11.5	11.7 (4.6)
Hours spent working in past week	<20	10.5	10.6 (5.2)
	≥20	12	11.9 (4.1)
Hours of free time in past week	<24	12	12.3 (4.3)
	≥24	12	11.3 (4.2)
Exercise frequency	Never/very occasionally	13	11.9 (3.7)
	Sometimes/often	12	11.3 (4.7)
Are you a worrier?	Yes	15	13.5 (4.6)
	No	11.5	10.7 (3.9)
Number of close friends*	<3	13	12 (5)
	≥3	12	11.5 (3.6)
Satisfied with personal study environment?	Yes	12	11.2 (4.3)
	No	13.5	13.8 (4.3)
Satisfied with diet?	Yes	12	11.2 (4.4)
	No	13	12.4 (4.1)
Number of headaches in past month*	<2	9.5	9.8 (4.3)
	≥2	13	13.2 (3.9)
Level of calm associated with studies*	<70	12	12 (3.6)
	≥70	12	11.2 (4.8)
Level of holiday need*	<80	9	9.7 (3.9)
	≥80	13	13.2 (4)
Do you usually sleep ≥8 hours per day?	Yes	9	9.9 (3.9)
	No	14	13.9 (3.8)
Coffee or tea preference	Coffee	12	12 (3.9)
	Tea	10.5	11.3 (4.6)
Morning or evening work preference	Morning	12	11.1 (4.3)
	Evening	12.5	12 (4.4)

\* Binary categorisations based on median values

**Table 3: Background variables/questions which produced numerical or significant stress score differences (in ascending order of significance)**

Background variable/question		N	Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U value	Sig
Do you usually sleep ≥8 hours per day?	Yes	25	16.9	97.5	.002
	No	18	29.1		
Level of holiday need	<80	20	16.2	113.5	.004
	≥80	23	27.1		
Number of headaches in past month*	<2	16	14.6	97	.012
	≥2	23	23.8		
Ethnicity	South Asian	10	26.2	93	.077
	African	30	18.6		
Are you a worrier?	Yes	13	27	129.5	.083
	No	30	19.8		

**Figure 1: Bar chart displaying frequency of stress scores**



## Pedagogical Inspiration through Martial Arts Instruction

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### Abstract

This article discusses how the martial arts studio can be used as a model for improved instruction for the classroom teacher. Four common teaching techniques, common to the martial arts classroom, are defined and described. They are (a) motivating by praise and recognition, (b) differentiating instruction, (c) using formative assessments, and (d) employing preventive discipline. Explanation and illustrations of how to generalize each technique for the academic classroom are also included.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, martial arts, praise, differentiated instruction, formative assessment, preventive discipline

### Sources of Pedagogical Inspiration

There are numerous sources for pedagogical inspiration. Each source seems to focus on a different outcome. Teacher preparation programs concentrate on the fundamental skills and knowledge that a fledgling teacher needs prior to setting foot in the classroom. On the job training and discussions with colleagues provide teachers with hands-on, practical knowledge grounded

in experience. Professional journals provide readers with cutting edge research and recommendation regarding best practices. One under-utilized source of potential inspiration is the examination of teaching instruction in non-traditional environments.

Teaching and learning consistently occurs in any number of environments outside of the traditional academic school. Some of the best places to look for such pedagogical inspiration are among the thousands of private businesses that teach non-academic skills to individuals on a regular basis. Examples of such skills might include music, dance, and athletics. One such booming area of focus within the area of sports is martial arts training.

### Martial Arts and Pedagogy

Martial arts are defined as: 'any of the traditional forms of Oriental self-defence or combat that utilize physical skill and coordination without weapons ('martial arts', Dictionary.com). Popular branches of martial arts, such as karate, tae-kwon do, and judo promise to help individuals gain confidence, improve focus, get in shape,

and learn to protect themselves.

In order to accomplish these objectives, martial arts instructors, or *sensei*, may use pedagogical techniques that appear unfamiliar or even strange to the uninitiated. The purpose of this article is to familiarize the reader with some instructional conventions common to the martial arts classroom, or *dojo*, that can be generalized to the academic classroom. The four pedagogic topics to be discussed are (a) motivating by praise and recognition, (b) differentiating instruction, (c) using formative assessments, and (d) employing preventive discipline.

### **Motivating by Praise and Recognition**

One of the most well-known aspects of traditional martial arts training is the belt system. Often beginning students start with a white-coloured belt to tie around the waist of their uniform, or *gi*. As the student progresses, he is awarded with various coloured belts associated with particular accomplishments. Usually, the last and most prestigious coloured belt, the black, is awarded to those students who demonstrate the highest levels of dedication, skill and knowledge.

Belt tests are scheduled on a frequent basis. Each student goes into the test knowing exactly what is expected of him in order to pass to the next level. Often, a formal advancement ceremony is held soon after testing to publically recognize students for their accomplishments. Martial arts students are often recognized in other ways, such as certificates or medals for consistent attendance, and dojo privileges, such as allowing advanced students to lead warm-up exercises. Regardless of the particular incentive, martial arts studios understand that the keys to student motivation are to award praise specifically and frequently.

Classroom teachers have long recognized the importance of positive reinforcement (Skinner 1953). Items such as stickers, gold stars, and candy have all been used and abused over the years in an attempt to shape student behaviour. However, best practices suggest that positive reinforcement, particularly praise, is much more effective when it follows two rules, (1.) students know the exact behaviour that earned praise, and (2.) the praise is administered very soon after the particular behaviour (Sutherland, Wehby & Yoder 2002).

For example, a primary school student might be learning to print letters of the alphabet. Best practices suggest that the teacher introduces specific feedback such as, 'You are doing a nice job with keeping your lines straight' as soon as the child has displayed the desired action. By doing so, the student knows exactly what she did to earn recognition, and is much more likely to repeat the desired behaviour in the near future.

### **Differentiating Instruction**

The composition of the traditional martial arts class may be a surprise for the first time observer. Most classes are not typically segregated by age, gender, size, or ability level. The forty-five year old man with a black belt is

expected to practice alongside the nine year old girl taking her first class.

In the dojo, unity and cooperation are highly valued. There are three different scenarios for instructional activities that may occur during the average class. Some activities, such as push-ups and stretches, can be completed by the entire class. Other activities may involve everyone practicing a certain skill, like a kick, but with the sensei adjusting the complexity based upon the students' belt level and experience. A third, less prevalent, set of activities involves students breaking up into groups based on belt level to work on moves relevant to their present ability. Throughout the entire class, it is emphasized that everyone comes to the dojo to learn and to improve. Fellow students are seen as fellow travellers in the journey towards martial arts mastery.

The myriad of activities described above may be best described as a form of differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction (DI) is defined as, 'a teacher's reacting responsively to a student's needs' (Tomlinson, & Demirsky Allen, 2000). DI recognizes that each student has unique experiences, strengths, and challenges when it comes to learning, and adjusts accordingly. DI is a recommended practice for many different sub-groups of students including gifted students (Tomlinson *et al.* 2004), students with learning disabilities (Bender, 2008), students with intellectual disabilities (Wehmeyer, Lance, & Bashinski 2002), and those that are English Language learners.

There are several methods that a teacher can use to individualize a lesson to meet the needs of her students (Tomlinson 2001). She may differentiate content (what is taught), process (how it is taught), or products (how students demonstrate mastery). Unfortunately, there is no 'magic instruction book' to dictate to teachers which particular technique will work best with which particular student. Although differentiation is often a matter of trial and error, continued practice and experience can lead to increased learning and greater success.

### **Using Formative Assessments**

Martial arts students are formally tested on their knowledge and skills on a regular basis. In order to advance in rank, students are required to demonstrate what they know, not only to their sensei, but often times to an impartial panel of judges and an invited audience of family and friends. To the casual observer, belt tests are a highly stressful environment.

However, the majority of students are calm and focused. They go through their moves with great precision and skill. Most are recognized for their efforts by being advanced to a higher level. Some of this success can be directly attributed to intense practice and long work. Yet, student confidence and assurance may stem from another source.

The sensei wants all of his students to succeed as much as possible. One way for this to happen is to ensure that

students are extremely prepared prior to testing. In the weeks leading up to the exam, the sensei meets individually with each student. He may require them to demonstrate the same set of skills that will be required for a promotion.

Students are given specific feedback and told exactly what they need to improve upon prior to the test. Some *dojos* go so far as to 'sign off' on students stating that they were able to successfully demonstrate required skills. In doing so, students receive the acknowledgement and confidence that they are fully prepared. The promotion test, therefore, becomes much less about proving ability, and more about replicating skills already mastered.

The evaluation techniques described above are examples of formative assessments. Formative assessments are concerned with 'feedback'. It is 'ongoing', 'dynamic', and 'used to make decisions regarding future learning' (Chappius & Chappius 2008). Instructors can utilize this technique to shape student performance in a number of ways. Activities such as warm-up questions, timed drills, homework assignment and classroom games are all recommended strategies to gauge learning and to prepare students for final (summative) assessments.

### Employing Preventive Discipline

Learning martial arts requires familiarity with an entirely new set of traditions, procedures, and routines that are unfamiliar to most beginners. Examples of such activities common to the dojo include taking your shoes off upon entering the building, bowing as a sign of respect, and responding to simple commands spoken in a foreign language. Beginning students naturally struggle in remembering all that is required in this new environment. When this occurs, students are rarely punished for their mistakes. Most sensei prefer to utilize some form of preventive discipline instead.

Preventive discipline, or pre-correction is a series of brief prompts, questions, statements, and gestures used with a student prior to when a predicted misbehavior usually occurs (Jolivet, Alter, Scott, Josephs, & Swoszowski, 2013). Preventive discipline asserts that it is more valuable to teach, rehearse, and remind beforehand, rather than punish afterward. For example, prior to entering the dojo, the sensei and student may stop at the doorway. The sensei asks, 'What are we supposed to do before entering the classroom?' He may then pause and wait for the student to respond, either verbally or by demonstrating the appropriate action. If the student does not know, or responds incorrectly, the sensei knows that this skill needs to be re-taught in more depth.

Classroom teachers can use preventive discipline in many ways. For example, they might remind students to write down their homework assignment in their agenda books prior to leaving for the day. This brief reminder reinforces teacher expectations, and keeps the desired

behaviour fresh in their mind immediately before school departure. Another way that teachers may use preventive discipline is to remind the class of school expectations as they apply to going to lunch. Simple prompts such as 'no running', 'inside voices', and 'hands to yourself' prior to leaving the classroom state school expectations in a non-intrusive manner and diminish the need for many punitive strategies.

### Final Thoughts

Martial arts' training contains a number of pedagogical resources that an academic teacher could incorporate into their own classroom. These techniques stress discipline, respect, and a student-centred approach. They also represent some of the most valued, but least reported dispositions in our modern public schools.

As a final note, it must be stated that these practices are based upon the observations of the author, and are not implied to be universally accepted by all *dojos*. The reader is encouraged to visit a local martial arts studio for more information and further instruction.

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## Electracy: The Internet as Fifth Estate

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This account of an experimental approach to apparatus invention is offered as an introduction to apparatus study in general (grammatology), and electracy as the digital apparatus in particular. The approach is that of the Florida Research Ensemble (FRE), working through the EmerAgency, a virtual consultancy developed to translate Arts & Letters pedagogy into institutional consulting. The term 'electracy' (modeled on 'literacy,' a portmanteau of 'electricity' and Derrida's 'trace') was adopted to clarify that digital technologies are not reducible to a 'media literacy,' but include, besides technological innovations, inventions in the dimensions of institution formation and related skill sets, and identity behaviors individual and collective (ethics and politics). Current members of the FRE include Gregory Ulmer (University of Florida), John Craig Freeman (Emerson College), Barbara Jo Revelle (University of Florida), Jack Stenner (University of Florida), Jan Holmervik (Clemson University).

### Disciplinary Paradigm: The Internet Accident

Based on the premise that every invention includes its own disaster – to invent the ship is to invent the shipwreck – Paul Virilio observed that we are now beginning to experience the catastrophes that go with the innovations introduced since the beginning of the Industrial revolution (the era of electracy). The ultimate disaster, Virilio says, is that of the General Accident, or Time Accident--a possibility created by digital technologies, especially as they evolve the capacities of telepresence. The electracy apparatus has created a pollution of dimensions that Virilio calls the 'dromosphere' ('dromos' = 'race').

Because of the instant speed of electronic media, our civilization is becoming trapped in the present moment. All trajectory of departure and journey is compressed into Now. If the oral apparatus ran on cyclical time, and the literate apparatus on linear time, electracy runs on now time. In the dromosphere no civic sphere is possible, and hence no democratic process, since there is no time for deliberative reason or critical thinking, or persuasion by the exchange of arguments: the decision has to be made in an instant. In short, however advanced might be the technologies produced by the sciences of pure reason, the ethical and political reasoning of individuals and communities are reduced to the intuitive biases that Malcolm Gladwell called 'blink.'

The context of grammatology shows that this crisis is not unanticipated. The blink is in the family of 'prudence,' which always has been assumed to work in an instant of immediacy, without concept or universal rule. The Ancients classified prudence (*phronesis*) as a virtue, since they were not convinced that it was teachable, although it might be trained through force of habit. One had presence of mind, *savoir faire*, *sprezzatura*, or one did not. One knew how to do and say the right thing at the right time or one did not: *kairos*. The FRE proposes

to design *a prosthesis* (both the equipment and the users' skill-set) for deliberative reason in the moment of blink. Electracy does for the blink of intuitive judgment what literacy did for analytical reason--augments the mind-body aptitude with the language apparatus, to create 'artificial judgment'.

### Theory

Grammatology – the history and theory of writing – addresses the challenge of the General Accident from the perspective of apparatus shift. The Internet is an institution emerging within electracy, which is to digital media what literacy is to alphabetic technology. Literacy is not only a technology of writing, but also the institution of school and its practices (method, definition of concepts, topical argument), and identity formation (selfhood, the democratic state). Grammatology does not follow in the footsteps of the masters (to borrow an aphorism from Basho), but seeks what they sought. The emergence of science out of the practices invented by the Greeks within the new institution of school (Academy, Lyceum) provides an analogy for what is needed today for the Internet--not just faster equipment with more memory, but also faster thought, to bring individual and collective human memory up to speed.

Many commentators have declared the need for a new logic native to new media, but few have indicated how to invent it. Heuristics (the logic of invention) provides one proven (literate) procedure for bootstrapping from one apparatus to the other. This method involves working analogically. The key analogy is with the Greek invention of metaphysics, meaning specifically (in Aristotle's terms) the invention of a category system. Electracy needs a mode of classification that does for the digital image what the concept did for the written word (definition as a practice organizing things according to essences and accidents). Virilio's Museum of the Accident explicitly plays on the pun relating modern disasters such as Chernobyl with the relation of 'accident' to substance in Western metaphysics.

This analogy shows that what electracy needs is an image category enabling decision-making in now-time. The Greeks distinguished between two fundamental modes of reason--pure and practical knowing. Pure reason concerns necessity and evolved into science as the study of the laws of nature. Practical reason concerns the contingencies of the lifeworld, matters of ethics and politics, involving choice among different options (*proairesis*). Both modes evolved throughout the era of literacy in a loosely coordinated way, at least until the Enlightenment. Practical reason was associated with the virtue of prudence (*phronesis*), the ability in the midst of a particular situation to make a decision based on lessons of the past that produced a good result in the future. Prudence reasons in the future perfect tense (what will have been). A feature of Roman-Christian

syncretism in the medieval era was the association of prudence with memory, manifested in adaptations of Classical mnemonics (memory palace) to meditations on the virtues and vices as a pedagogy of salvation.

In the Renaissance the alliance between pure and practical reason began to dissolve and the invention streams of science and ethics/politics began to separate. To see what is at stake we need only note that Machiavelli is to prudence what Descartes is to science. The purpose of Machiavelli's *Prince* and *Discourses* was to teach the art of applying the 'rules' learned from the past to particular situations on a case-by-case basis. Gramsci took up this challenge in the 20th century, dubbing it 'hegemony,' while proposing that the new prince must be not an individual but a group, such as a political party. Poststructural theory continues this evolution, as in the work of Ernesto Laclau (building on Lacan and Derrida), redescribing hegemony as a hybrid of the logics of difference and equivalence. In the absence of the old universals (the Polis, God, Reason, Utility), collective identity must rely on a new category system that gathers disparate entities (things, people, institutions) into sets by means of a logical 'rat bridge' (Laclau's phrase, alluding to Freud's Rat Man case: meanings constructed using the principles of tropical dreamwork). The Internet institutionalizes a political unconscious.

### Memory

Grammatology places the invention of the Internet in the context of the history of memory. When during the Renaissance Camillo built his two-room prototype of a working memory palace, to get funding from the king of France, the invention stream was still intact: the equipment (the rooms lined with drawers filled with the writings of Cicero and designed to generate original orations) and the skill-set (mnemonic method of places and images associated with information). The identification of prudence with memory became entangled in the era of print with the search for a perfect (universal) language. The Egyptian hieroglyph was mistaken as a version of the language of Adam, with emblems capable of direct communication of reality. The role of places and images in mnemonic practice took on the magical powers of hermetic science. The stream was still connected by the time of Leibniz, who participated in the shift in this search for an absolute logic to Chinese as the model. Leibniz praised Chinese civilization for its superiority to Western civilization in the area of practical reason. The *I Ching* was one of the great inventions of all history, being a popular practice for allowing ordinary (even illiterate) citizens to use the wisdom philosophies (Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism) for making everyday decisions.

The Chinese lesson (*via* Leibniz) for electracy is that image categories (image metaphysics) work in the manner of an oracle (the querent actively supplies from personal experience the 'parole' of the consultation). Camillo's memory palace and other related systems (Lull's wheels) are the direct predecessors of Babbage's calculating engine, Bush's Memex, Nelson's Xanadu, and finally of the Internet itself. The bias of the

Enlightenment favoring pure reason, however, separated memory equipment from mnemonic logic, which went underground, following the channels of hermetic magic, and producing along the way the mystical tarot. Kant promoted aesthetic judgment to the status of a faculty of mind, intended to bridge (rat bridge) the chasm separating pure and practical reason, but whose outcome historically was an acknowledgement that the two-cultures split is metaphysical. Memory and prudence reentered mainstream philosophy in later Heidegger, whose reading of Aristotle's ethics influenced his turn from 'science' (pure reason, ontology) to practical reason (*Ereignis*), reasoning in the moment of a particular situation (from 'being' to 'belonging to him'—two meanings of 'sein'). Meanwhile, as Jacques Lacan testified, the hermetic, esoteric tradition codified in the Neoplatonic Academy of Florence during the Renaissance, was appropriated and internalized as the 'unconscious' in the theory and practice of psychoanalysis. An alternative description of the unconscious is not that it is structured like a language, but that it communicates in the manner of a Renaissance humanist.

The practice of memory also survived in modernist poetics (Baudelaire's correspondences, Rilke's *Weltinnenraum*, Eliot's objective correlative, Joyce's epiphany, Proust's involuntary memory, to name some of the most prominent examples). Heidegger took his authority from Heraclitus, who, referring to the Delphic oracle, stated that the world neither revealed nor concealed, but gave a sign (Wink). Heidegger's effort to articulate the event (*Ereignis*) of situated decision, without contamination by the vocabulary of ontology (that is, without literate philosophy), is a point of departure for the most interesting aspects of Derrida's thought (among others). The challenge of now-time for deliberative reason, following Derrida's *aporia*, is that time for humans is always 'out of joint,' haunted by potentiality. Benjamin expressed a similar insight in his work with the dialectical image, explicitly formulated as Now-time (*Jetztzeit*), as did Freud with the technique of transference. The grammatological insight of this history is that the invention of electracy emerges from the reintegration of these two invention streams -- science (equipment) and mnemonics (rhetoric).

### The Experiment

Beginning in the early 1990s a collaborative arts group called the Florida Research Ensemble (FRE), undertook a long-term experiment to design and test an image category and its related logical practice. Ulmer theorized the category as 'chora' in *Heuretics* (1994), based on Derrida's collaboration with Peter Eisenman on a design for the Parc de la Villette in Paris. 'Chora' is a Greek term for 'space' or 'region,' given metaphysical importance in Plato's *Timaeus* as the dimension of mediation in which Being and Becoming (universal forms and particular matter) interacted. Aristotle preferred a more restricted notion of abstract place (*topos*) as a metaphor for logical or mental space, although chora remained active in the tradition through Ptolemy and the development of

geography. Conventional chorography, that is, supplements the exact geometric measures of cartography with mimetic resources of the plastic arts. To indicate the deconstructive element in his use of the term, Ulmer dubbed his practice 'choragraphy' (with an 'a'). 'Chora' is to electracy what 'topic' is to literacy, placing discrete literate concepts into holistic field constellations, replacing inference with (strange) attractors. Choragraphy as an electracy mnemonics is a hybrid of the Western memory tradition and the Eastern mnemonics of oracles (with the prototype being the *I Ching*). Meanwhile, traditional chorography prospers in the technical register of electracy, as currently instantiated in Google Maps.

The purpose of the experiment is to design and test a practice of practical or deliberative reason for the apparatus of electracy. The experiment is framed in terms of consulting, as a practice for the EmerAgency, a distributed consultancy. The EmerAgency constitutes a collective shifter, a transcendental group subject supported by online applications coordinating the testimony of citizens, enabling them to participate in public policy formation and decisions. The Internet through EmerAgency consulting may function as a fifth estate, adding a citizen voice to the agenda-setting powers of the other four estates (three branches of government plus journalism). The potential role of social media in constituting an electracy public sphere is apparent in a movement such as Occupy. Social media perform an intersubjective logos, gathering people in specific locations as well as virtually. The missing element is a rhetoric, an electracy logic capable of interfacing individuals with total data and information, to produce distributed singularities (collective awareness of agency). The logic of crowd reason remains to be invented.

The prototype for the consultancy was developed for the city of Miami. The occasion was that of an 'image crisis' that resulted from a series of tourist murders in the state of Florida. The FRE project began as a critical counterpoint to the official response, which was to hire an advertising agency to repair the state's 'image'. What was the 'attraction' of Florida? To supplement the attention given to tourists, the FRE focused on Haitian immigration. The triggering incident was the arrival in the Miami River of a large boat filled with undocumented Haitians. This incident motivated the selection of the Miami River as the choral site. The goal was to create a digital chora--a virtual memory--mediating between the actual city of Miami, and the media image (spelled 'Myami').

The Miami River is a site of every policy problem existing in Florida, with some thirty-four different agencies having overlapping and conflicting jurisdiction. This region is dubbed a 'zone,' alluding to the sense of this term in Marker and Tarkovsky, with connotations of Joseph Beuys's city 'wound'. Literacy does not provide a means to think these jurisdictions together, holistically. Chora as an image category provides just such a holistic thought orchestration. Chora is a coordination into an

intelligible pattern of a set of topoi contingently associated with a particular place and time. The Web chora supporting citizen consultation on the relationship of Miami-Myami is named 'Miautre' (a creolized my-other). The name alludes to Derrida's *Politics of Friendship* (my friend, *mon ami*, *mi amigo*, *Mi-ami*).

## Design

### Level 1: Chorography

The first level begins within the traditional practice of chorography, updated to exploit the mimetic and plastic resources of the most advanced imaging technologies. Freeman created a representation of the river 'zone', combining existing satellite and aerial photographic maps with 360-degree panoramas at each of the 'hot-spots' discovered in the zone. This level corresponds to the places of a memory palace (usually based on the public streets and personal spaces familiar to the maker).

### Level 2: Choragraphy

The second level was produced by Revelle, a creative photographer, using a version of situationist psychogeography. Revelle lived at an Inn on the Miami River for five weeks, in the Summer of 1998, and drifted daily through the zone, recording her 'encounters' with the locals, using still photography and video recordings. This level corresponds to the 'active images' of a traditional memory palace. It also exploits the 'mirror' effect reported by Antonio Damasio and other neuroscientists -- the capacity of humans to recognize and construct their own being through features of external environments (epiphany).

### Level 3: Choramancy

The third level concerns the interface metaphor, experimenting with the mode of citizen consultancy, formulated as a hybrid or syncretism joining Western consulting (specialized knowledge applied to public problems) with Non-Western divination (consulting an oracle for personal problems). The goal of the experiment was to capture the mood or attunement of the zone, and to use this mood or atmosphere to visualize an emergent situation resulting from the peculiar mix of problems/topoi gathered in Miautre. To this end, Revelle served as querent to the FRE diviner. Before undertaking her drift she posed a question of personal concern. She wanted to understand her troubled situation with respect to her partner (Ron). At the end of the five-week residency, the FRE group reviewed Revelle's materials (photographs, video interviews, journals), and found a pattern of material 'winks': used mattresses showed up as symptoms of at least three different public policy problems: gentrification; homelessness; Haitian trading vessels. Revelle was offered the three policy settings as answers to her question. She recognized her situation in the dilemma of the traders. Their boats were impounded by the Coast Guard, as part of a policy to eliminate substandard ships from the Miami River port. This policy of impoundment produced a parable or fable effect, giving through the hypotyposis of a proportional analogy an image of her love relationship with her partner.

The full report documenting the Miami prototype is available as an ePub (Community University Research Alliance, Small Cities Imprint): <http://smallcities.tru.ca/index.php/cura/issue/view/5>

### Work In Progress

An outline of EmerAgency projects is documented at <http://emeragency.electracy.org/>.

The Miami experiment, for example, is projected as an Internet prototype called the Ka-Ching: the cash register onomatopoeia alludes to the syncretic nature of an updated oracle functionality, that does for global practical reason what the I Ching and tarot (among others) did for pre-modern civilizations. The difference between traditional oracles and the Ka-Ching is that the former were composed by sages as established wisdom, while the latter is open source, distributed, generated on the fly interactively, by those who consult it (crowd sage). The challenge facing democratic policy formation in conditions of the dromosphere is how to coordinate all levels of decision-making in an instant. The divination/consulting interface promises to do that, by making explicit the mutual dependence of public collective and personal individual decisions (politics and

ethics) on the logics of identification (Laclau's difference and equivalence, dream work and commodity).

By making the data of a public-policy dilemma the vehicle for a fable about an individual's personal dilemma, a double awareness is created in real time: first, citizens are motivated to pay close attention to the details of public problems, since these hold the clues to their own problem. Second, this level of scrutiny modifies the behavior of public decision makers, who realize that their actions are being monitored by the general public. The digital capacities of the Web to register the collective effect of individual searches create a feedback loop, contributing agenda-setting priorities based on citizen acts of identification (hegemony). The larger ambition of the Ka-Ching is to serve as the means by which a group (collective) subject becomes self-aware of its agency. The fundamental knowledge addressed in EmerAgency consulting is the experience of well-being. The insight calling for a transformation of global policy formation is that the individual human body in its capacities of need, demand, and desire, is the dimension of reality made accessible to ontology in electracy.

## Key Pedagogic Thinkers

### Paul Natorp (1854-1924)

Gabriel Eichsteller & Sylvia Holthoff, ThemPra Social Pedagogy

Paul Natorp is often considered one of the first *social* pedagogical key thinkers and has played a vital role in shaping social pedagogy in Germany. Born to a Protestant minister in Düsseldorf/Germany in 1854, Natorp lived in turbulent times: despite its failure to unify the Germany states, the Revolution in 1848/1849 had changed the political landscape and social order by ending the feudal system; and from around the 1830s the Industrial Revolution had been leading to increasing urbanisation as people moved from rural areas to the cities with the aim to find work in the factories. As urban areas grew, so did social problems such as exploitative working conditions, homelessness and starvation.

Having studied music, history, and philosophy, Natorp soon became an influential social philosopher during his time as professor for philosophy and pedagogy at the University of Marburg. Together with his colleagues, Natorp became known as part of the so-called Marburg School, which gradually established social pedagogy as an academic discipline in its own right. Natorp was not the first to coin the term 'social pedagogy', which had been previously used by Adolph Diesterweg and Karl Mager in 1844, and many social pedagogical ideas date further back to earlier social and educational philosophers, such as John Amos Comenius, Jean-Jacques Rousseau or Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi; yet, Natorp is often considered the 'birth father' of social pedagogy as he was the first to develop social pedagogy

in any significant way (Niemeyer, 2005). In doing so, Natorp introduced the term social pedagogy to a broad audience stretching beyond the academic discourse and into the public domain (Wendt, 2008).

### Influences and Ideas

Natorp's social pedagogy can be conceptualised as a social philosophy of upbringing, which draws its key influences from Plato, Immanuel Kant and Pestalozzi. As Niemeyer (2005) notes, in order to understand Natorp's work, it is essential to consider its relatedness to the social philosophical thinking prevalent at that time, which was dominated by the ideas of John Locke, Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Kant. All of them were concerned with the structure of society and its implications for inter-human relationships. Similarly, pedagogical thinking at Natorp's time was no longer merely focussed on the individual child's upbringing but reflected upon its contribution towards creating human togetherness and societal order.

In his philosophical perspective Natorp was influenced by Plato's ideas about the relationship between the individual and the *polis*, the city-state. Plato imagined the polis as an organically constructed human-society, an organism that aims towards justice and follows reason. In Natorp's understanding it 'is geared toward the spiritual life and the complete educational development of each person in it. The person, after



being educated, will want to serve the state as his/her community', as Saltzman (1998) notes. This means that, for Natorp, all education is social education, or *Sozialpädagogik*.

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant and his works on reason and morality were a further vital source of inspiration for Natorp. One of Kant's central maxims, the *categorical imperative*, demands that we treat people as subjects in their own rights instead of treating them as means to an end. While religion had previously argued that human goodness is something that God commands, Kant argued that reason commands this too. We should not merely treat others with respect out of fear of a higher power, but because this is reasonable if we want to be treated with dignity ourselves, according to Kant's *moral imperative*. Kant thus helped explain social interaction in a way that saw intrinsic value in good respectful human behaviour. Kant's work on social ethics resonated with Natorp and impacted on his perspective on morality within society.

Natorp was also influenced by Pestalozzi's concepts on community education, outlined in the Swiss pedagogue's 1819 popular novel *Lienhard & Gertrud*. In this he described an oppressed village community, morally and economically impoverished as a consequence of the corruption and greed of the squire. The novel also outlines how, through re-structuring and a series of socio-economic and pedagogic interventions, the inhabitants are gradually enabled to live in justice, realise their intrinsic potential and live their lives as their own creation (Thiersch 1996). Pestalozzi's views on educating for humanity and on improving societal conditions reinforced Natorp's perception that 'all pedagogy should be social, that is, that in the philosophy of education the interaction of educational processes and society must be taken into consideration', according to Hämäläinen (2003, p.73).

### Key works

Building on these philosophical perspectives, Natorp published a monograph in 1894 titled *Religion within the Bounds of Humanity: A Chapter for the Establishment of Social Pedagogy*. In what was the first major work on social pedagogy, he aimed to find an answer to the intensively discussed 'social question' in the late 1800s, when industrialisation, secularisation and urbanisation were causing massive social change, new inequalities and destitute living conditions for the increasing working class. In Natorp's view, the central issue was how to overcome the legally established rule of power by capital over poor labour, with its destructive consequences for the morality of the entire people (Natorp 1894).

Natorp argued that these social issues were not about material poverty but about impoverishment of social existence, that a lack of social cohesion in Germany had caused many of the social problems. What was needed was therefore a clearly pedagogic answer to the social question, one that reconceptualised the relationship between the individual and society. This social pedagogy

should aim to encourage a strong sense of community (*Gemeinschaft*), educate both children and adults to ensure positive relations between the individual and society, and 'fight to close the gap between rich and poor' (Smith 2009). Natorp realised that as social pedagogy is about the individual in relation to society, social pedagogy has to address both sides – rather than only working with the individual it must also attempt to influence the social system and to optimise it.

As Niemeyer (2005) explains, Natorp argued that at a theoretic level social pedagogy must research how education is related to the social conditions people live in and how social life in the community is affected by educational conditions, i.e. the lack of educational opportunities for the working class (Natorp 1894). But while a theoretic understanding of the problem is important, it has to be complemented by practical action. Natorp thought that a practical level social pedagogy must find means and ways to design these social and educational conditions. Through this he aimed to create educational opportunities for those who do not have them and to educate or renew the community so as to develop people's morality. Thus Natorp combined the person-centred and community-centred aspects of education in his concept of social pedagogy.

Niemeyer (2005) concludes that, as a result, social pedagogy was seen by Natorp as contributing to shaping the social, the community and its circumstances. Where previously the influence of religion had meant that the concern was with salvation of man from a sinful world, Natorp argued for creating a world worth living in, because and as long as man does not become his own, and other people's, opponent but finds human community.

This article is based on our chapter 'Conceptual Foundations' in C. Cameron & P. Moss (2011) *Social Pedagogy and Working with Children and Young People* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers) and printed here with permission by JKP.

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## Special Feature Peer Assisted Learning

### PAL Leader Training at Bournemouth University: 12 years on and still evolving

Steve Parton and Victoria Noad, The Sir Michael Cobham Library, Bournemouth University

#### Abstract

Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) at Bournemouth University (BU) is a peer mentoring scheme that fosters cross-year support between students on the same course.

Coordination of PAL, including leader training, is run centrally within Student and Academic Services by the PAL Coordination Team. Successful applicants attend two days of compulsory training in June or September with optional follow up training sessions offered throughout the autumn term.

As with other training programmes for peer learning schemes, including Supplemental Instruction (SI), upon which PAL is based (Arendale 1994; Jacobs *et al.* 2008), the concept of modelling is integral to the training. Trainers employ small group learning techniques and frequently re-direct questions. Leaders can then use these approaches in their own sessions. Crucially, all attendees lead a simulated PAL session.

Weekly follow up training is delivered in collaboration with other support staff, providing information on various academic skills, support services and ideas for related PAL sessions.

Like PAL itself, leader training has evolved gradually since it began in 2001. Changes include:

- training on new online community areas on the University's Virtual Learning Environment;
- streamlining of initial training in response to trainee feedback.

However, the overarching principles of the training, established by the founders of the scheme, remain (Capstick *et al.* 2004). Qualitative feedback from 2011-2012 trainees after completing training, and from a later survey delivered to them towards the end of their role, has further confirmed the continued power of this training while revealing potential ways to strengthen it.

**Keywords:** Peer Assisted Learning; training PAL leaders; Bournemouth University; mentoring; undergraduate students.

#### PAL at Bournemouth University

Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) is a peer mentoring scheme run centrally from the department of Student and Academic Services for five of the University's six academic schools. PAL has been running successfully at Bournemouth University (BU) since 2001.

PAL leaders are generally second year students recruited to facilitate regular sessions for 1<sup>st</sup> year students from the same course. In PAL sessions leaders encourage discussion, collaborative learning, and share experiences of the first year of their course from the student perspective (Fleming 2009a). The content of sessions is largely student driven, but leaders also meet with PAL course contacts (usually first year programme leaders from their academic school) who are able to steer them in the right direction and contextualise the sessions they run. Leaders are paid for each hour long session they run, along with 30 minutes of preparation time. Leaders may also gain points and develop transferable skills towards earning the BU Student Development Award (Bournemouth University 2012A). Leaders are not paid for any training they receive.

In its first pilot year, 2001-2, five students studying Hospitality Management within what is now the School of Tourism '...were recruited and trained for the role of Student Leader' (Capstick & Fleming 2001 p. 72). By 2011/12, PAL supported virtually all courses or frameworks at full-time undergraduate level at BU, with 151 trained leaders supporting 2,435 first year students. For 2012/13, 180 leaders have already been recruited. PAL has been embraced across the university, is highlighted in the University's Strategic Plan (Bournemouth University 2012b) and is a strong selling point to potential students applying to BU. PAL continues to perform an important role for students, not just in supporting academic development for 1st years but also in easing their transition to university life. The timeline below shows how PAL at BU has developed over the past decade and will continue to expand into 2012-13 supporting the University's commitment to providing coaching and mentoring support for all students.

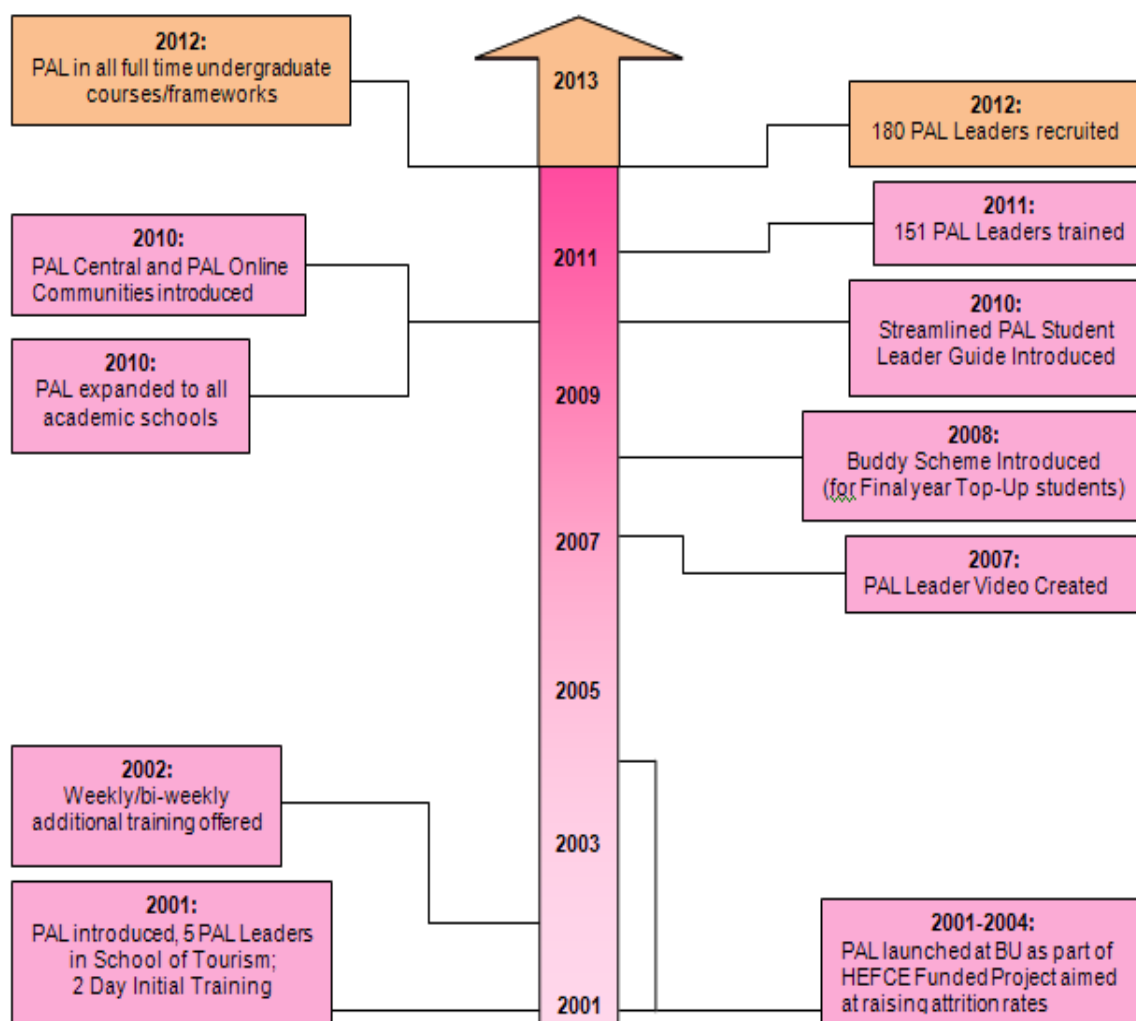


Figure 1: Development of PAL Leader Training since 2001

#### PAL leader training at BU

As with the PAL scheme itself, the roots of the training lie within the original Supplemental Instruction (SI) Model, pioneered at the University of Kansas-Missouri City in the 1970s (Arendale 1994; Jacobs *et al.* 2008). Approaches used in the centre for SI training programme including modelling of group and active learning activities by the trainer, encouraging listening skills, and specific facilitation skills such as the redirection of questions, have featured in PAL Leader training since it first began (Capstick & Fleming 2001). However, BU and other UK institutions have adapted training to suit the PAL model of peer mentoring, which tailors SI more to the UK Higher Education system (Wallace 1992; Fleming 2009b).

Embedding PAL into first year timetables has proven to be successful because it is not viewed by students as a 'deficit model' of student support (Andrews & Clark 2011). So, Leaders at BU for example are not expected to be particularly academically strong in their subject, and the scheme does not target historically difficult subjects, struggling students, or specific units/modules.

Therefore the focus of the training reflects this. Leaders support all students in a particular seminar group with every module of that course and in adapting to university life. As the PAL scheme has expanded to courses university-wide, incoming first year students view attending PAL sessions as part of the BU first year experience.

Leaders must therefore develop group facilitation skills, encouraging the group to formulate the answers through collaborative discussion and if this is not possible, know which department or staff member of the University to refer students to.

As the content of the training is moulded to fit BU, it can be argued that there is no 'one size fits all' model for training of PAL leaders. Some of the training content will inevitably be shaped to suit the needs of the institution that it fits within. A number of universities, including the University of Manchester, University of West England and the University of Birmingham, take a staggered approach to delivery. For example, Manchester's Peer Assisted Study Support (PASS) leaders complete four

half-day training components which become increasingly subject specific (University of Manchester 2012). A number of universities have also developed accredited PAL or SI courses with leaders being assessed and achieving credits for undertaking their training (University of West England 2012).

At BU, the initial training is delivered over two consecutive days. Several two-day slots are offered in June or September prior to the start of their role. This is compulsory for all recruited leaders to attend. The progress of the trainees is monitored by the trainers to ensure all are suitable for the role. Additional training is offered throughout the autumn term. Leaders are also observed running at least one of their sessions by a member of the PAL Coordination Team during the autumn term. Feedback is discussed with the leader(s) after the session and a typed copy of the feedback is sent to them.

#### Aims of PAL training at BU

The founder of the scheme, Hugh Fleming (2007), set out the aims of the initial training and to a large extent these remain unchanged:

'The aim of our initial training programme is to provide new PAL Leaders with:

- an overview of the main ideas upon which PAL is based;
- an introduction to a range of activities and techniques Leaders should use to help them run their PAL sessions effectively and structure group discussions;
- opportunities to discuss these ideas with the trainers and with each other;
- opportunities to put these skills and techniques into practice;
- opportunities to meet with experienced PAL Leaders' (Fleming 2007).

#### Content of Initial PAL Leader Training

Tables 1 and 2 outline activities of the initial training. The content closely follows the natural arc given in the aims listed above. Initially, the focus is on the nature of the scheme itself and the facilitation skills students will need to use as Leaders, as well as the resources and support available to them including PAL Central, a community area developed for Leaders on myBU, the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). A video, *How to run PAL Sessions*, developed by the former PAL Coordinator and Television Production students and presented by former leaders, stresses the importance of structuring and planning PAL sessions is also played.

8.45	Coffee/Tea available
9.00	Welcome and introductions
9.30	Activity: What Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) is all about
10.00	Activity: Experiences of PAL
10.45	Coffee/Tea Break
11.00	Short film: 'How to run your PAL sessions' followed by discussion
11.45	Introduction to where resources are in myBU; use of sign up lists; using groups; blogs; wikis; discussion boards; Academic Skills Community; linking to facebook from menu; posting announcements; how to use a data projector; check that students can see correct PAL groups; how to use the GradeCentre as a register
13.15	Lunch
2.00	Activity: What are the similarities and differences between PAL and teaching? Small group discussion and report back.
2.25	Simulated PAL session 1: Content video Leaders prepare review activities
2.55	Simulated PAL session 1: activity
3.25	Debriefing on Simulated PAL session
3.40	Coffee/Tea Break
3.45	Simulated PAL session 2: Content video Leaders prepare review activities.
4.15	Simulated PAL session 2: activity
4.45	Debriefing on Simulated PAL session Groupings for tomorrow's discussion on 'How to run PAL sessions'
5.00	End

**Table 1:** PAL Leader Initial Training Programme 2011: Day 1

8.45	Coffee/Tea available
9.00	How to Run PAL sessions Aim to give a 4 minute report and then lead discussion on each of the items you have read. Your report should cover the following:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three most important things you have learned.</li> <li>• How you would use these suggestions in your PAL sessions.</li> <li>• The extent to which your PAL Leader(s) last year used these suggestions.</li> <li>• Which ideas you would find easiest/most difficult to use, and why?</li> <li>• Which ideas, if any, you think students in your group might find difficult, and why?</li> </ul>
9.45	Simulated PAL session 3: Content video. Leaders prepare review activities
10.15	Simulated PAL session 3: activity
10.45	Debriefing on Simulated PAL session
11.00	Coffee/Tea Break
11.15	Working with students with a disability
12.15	Cultural awareness
1.15	Q & A session with PAL Leader(s) from last year
1.30	Lunch with PAL Leader(s) from previous years
2.00	Boundary setting
2.30	Meet with staff from School, including administrator who will collect in PAL paperwork and discuss payment. This will be a chance to discuss school-related issues, including how to book rooms.
3.00	Planning your first PAL session.
3.30	End

**Table 2:** PAL Leader Initial Training Programme 2011: Day 2

The focus then shifts to the experience of running PAL, including the opportunity for all trainees to lead a simulated PAL session. Visiting speakers come in to talk about Additional Learning Support and Cultural Awareness, which performs the function of sign-posting important support services to Leaders so they can direct their student to them in the future (Boyle 1998). Leaders are also given the opportunity to meet former Leaders and talk with them more informally over lunch. There is emphasis on the specific nature of PAL in their discipline with the opportunity to meet with their academic course contacts; as well as plan their first PAL session with leaders from similar disciplines. Once Leaders have all had a chance to run a mock session, the training seeks to address the realistic challenges leaders may face with their groups, including the need to set boundaries with peers. Finally, their employment paperwork is issued to them and guidance on how to complete the forms provided.

A key component of the training at BU, as with many peer mentoring training programmes, is the simulated PAL session. This is where trainees get the chance to prepare and deliver a pretend PAL session to a small group. Leaders are selected for each simulated session, normally in pairs, and watch the opening minutes of a documentary/lecture before being sent away to plan a 20 minute PAL session. They then lead a PAL session to their group, who have watched and made notes on the

entire video, thus replicating a real life lecture. Afterwards, the leaders, their groups, and finally the trainers give feedback on how the sessions went in order to provide the leaders with a 360 degree perspective. This helps them to further reflect on their facilitation skills, and to develop and gain confidence.

#### **Recent Modifications to the Training Content**

In recent years, additional elements have been incorporated as the scheme has evolved. Given the increasingly blended approach taken to the delivery of PAL, guidance and the use of online support materials has been incorporated into the initial training. Advice on using the online community areas of the University VLE (developed in 2010 by a BU Learning Technologist, Tamsyn Smith) have been added for example. Leaders are given an overview of PAL Central, a community which includes guidance information for leaders such as session ideas, resources for different learning techniques, and other material previously distributed in a large printed manual. Leaders also get the chance to explore the programme communities accessible by first year students and leaders, and post an introductory announcement for their new group. This part of the training is important so that leaders are comfortable working with technology and once they are in their new role they can take advantage of these communication channels. It also ensures they can answer basic IT enquiries.



Figure 2: Image of PAL Central Community on VLE

A perennial criticism of the training from attendees is that it is too long. In response to this we have endeavoured to streamline initial training as much as possible, without compromising the quality of their experience by shortening the second day and moving more extended training activities into the additional training programme.

### Approaches used

Throughout the initial training, the trainer aims to create an active student centred learning environment which models the approach Leaders should use in their PAL sessions (Boyle 1998; Fleming 2007). Trainers frequently re-direct questions, encouraging Leaders to reflect on particular ideas and situations and come up with their own answers. The trainees in turn begin to recognise how this technique can be employed in their own future PAL sessions and appreciate its power (Jacobs *et al.* 2008). Trainees are also encouraged to use wait time when obtaining feedback from questions. Students attending PAL sessions will, as a result, be encouraged to think for themselves rather than become reliant on leaders for answers which they may not be able to give.

During the course of the two days, trainees are frequently moved around so they can benefit from hearing new perspectives and ideas and do not congregate with people they already know. Again, the trainees recognise this is good practice for their own future PAL sessions.

A variety of small group learning techniques, including 'think, pair, share,' 'pyramid,' and 'jigsaw', are modelled

throughout to raise leaders' awareness of various group learning techniques and demonstrate how effective they can be when used in their own sessions.

To prepare them for gathering feedback in their own sessions, leaders are encouraged to write responses to discussions on a whiteboard (or flipchart) so they can refer back to earlier ideas, develop these further at a later stage, and compare their responses to other groups' responses. Feedback is also recorded by the trainer on a discussion board in PAL Central so at any time later in the year, leaders can refer back to the responses from their training and also access responses from other training days. This also models how leaders can utilise their PAL Programme Community to record discussions during sessions and post them in the community so that their group may refer back to these notes at any time.

### Logistics

From our experience the optimum number of leaders for initial training is 24, ideally facilitated by 2 trainers. This makes it easy to work in pairs or 4 groups of 6, and gives everyone the opportunity to be a leader in simulated session with a partner. This also means a reasonable amount of students are left to participate in the simulated session. However, we have worked with larger and smaller groups than this in the past. Depending on the activity, grouping students on tables of 4-6 tends to work best. This way it is easy to focus on a discussion and share ideas. Trainers are able to move around the room monitoring progress and manage

group activities effectively, whilst allowing for sufficient discussion.

In 2011/12 six training slots were run during June and September and two additional condensed one-day sessions for a number of late leader recruits were also offered. Timetabling training slots can be challenging and it is important a suitable room is found in good time. Seminar rooms with several whiteboards or enough space for four or five flipcharts are essential, as is a data projector and facilities to play video content such as the documentaries for the simulated session. It is also useful to have a smaller separate room booked for the simulated session where leaders can sit and plan their session with their paired leader.

A PAL Student Leader Guide is also used considerably throughout the two days. It has been specially produced for leader training and includes information about the training activities. This is distributed to attendees in advance of their training. This guide is structured in chronological order by training activity and students are encouraged to annotate it, as it can also be referred to after the training has been completed. Additional information and support are also available via PAL Central and this is signposted during the training.

#### Additional training

The diagram shows a rectangular box divided into two equal vertical sections by a thick black line. In the top-left section, there is a thought bubble containing the text: 'Which aspects of the PAL training do you think will be useful?'. In the top-right section, there is a thought bubble containing the text: 'How do you think the PAL training could be improved?'. Below each thought bubble are three small circles, indicating a continuation of the form.

**Figure 3:** Initial Feedback Form

#### Initial Feedback

The initial feedback we received was generally very positive. Many trainee leaders remarked that the simulated PAL sessions had been particularly useful in preparing them for their role.

'The simulated PAL sessions were good because it involved everyone and gives you an understanding of what's expected and how it feels.'

They also valued:

- advice on planning and structuring PAL sessions;
- opportunities to develop facilitation skills e.g. redirecting questions, gathering feedback, employing wait time;
- group management skills and techniques modelled during the training;
- additional learning support, cultural awareness and boundary setting sessions.

The most suggested improvement for training was for it to be condensed as they felt it was too long. The second

Early into the scheme, the previous PAL Coordinator introduced additional training sessions in the autumn term as a way of enhancing skills and keeping a connection with existing PAL leaders (Fleming *et al.* 2004).

Additional training continues to be offered weekly throughout the autumn term on topics such as learning styles, referencing activities, and employability skills. These sessions model group based activities as in the initial training. Sessions are run by the PAL Coordination Team, various guest speakers from across Student and Academic Services, and the Students' Union. These are not compulsory or well attended, but informal feedback from leaders attests to them being useful.

#### Evaluation of the 2011/12 training

For this year, a number of evaluative measures were put in place. There was a light touch initial feedback form (Figure 3) in which trainees were asked to complete at the end of initial training. Leaders were also surveyed at the end of the year and were asked to feedback on how useful they found the initial training, having now spent a year in the role. This was part of a more extensive evaluation of the scheme for 2011/12 which was written up as a final report. This surveyed both first year students receiving PAL and leaders, and this year was triangulated with several focus groups.

most suggested improvement was of the catering provided. Some trainees also would have liked:

- more former PAL leaders to have come along to the training and have heard more input from them;
- more course specific content in the training.

#### PAL 2011/12 Evaluation feedback: PAL leaders

Leaders were asked to complete an evaluative survey, which included a question on the training. They were asked: 'Thinking back, how useful was the 2-day initial training in preparing you for your role?'

An overwhelming majority of PAL leader respondents found the two day initial training to be useful with a slight majority of 53.3% finding it very useful, which is very encouraging.

From additional qualitative comments found in the survey responses which relate to training, the most popular request was to make training more course-specific. Suggestions included:

- having simulated PAL sessions in training that related directly to their course (planning sessions around videos/programmes of course related content);
- having a separate day or part day of training that deals specifically with the course/framework itself with attendees only interacting with Leaders from their course/programme;
- academic staff to lead and shape some of the content of training.

The last two suggestions mirror the way the University of Manchester (2011) run their PASS leader training with inclusion of a 'discipline-specific session' all leaders must complete.

There were also a number of respondents who felt that the initial training could include more role play activities.

#### **PAL 2011/12 Evaluation Feedback: PAL recipients**

From the surveys and focus groups of first years receiving PAL, certain criticisms of the scheme emerged that could be addressed through the training. These included:

- poor timetabling of sessions;
- lack of structure or planning for some PAL sessions;
- certain PAL Leaders who were unable to deal effectively with disruptive students.

#### **Responding to Evaluation Feedback**

The PAL Coordination Team must continue to look at ways to make the initial training more concise without diluting its content. For 2012/13 the second day has been shortened by reducing the time allocated for lunch and tea/coffee breaks.

Introducing more course specific content to initial training is also something that needs further exploration. Making radical changes would be challenging at this stage. With the small team of staff in the PAL Coordination Team (who have other work commitments), it would be difficult to introduce the four half-day training options with course specific components Manchester provide for their PASS Leaders for example. The inevitable administrative and staffing implications of coordinating four separate half-day training sessions would be too great. It would also be difficult if academics had to contribute further to the training. Indeed, we already include some course specific elements in the second day and it has so far proved difficult and rather impractical to get all of our PAL Course Contacts to attend the training slots. This is understandable given the high workloads of academic staff.

Despite this, some changes have been made for the next academic year (2012-13). Various course specific previous Leader Observation Forms (anonymised) have been distributed to each trainee towards the end of their second day of training. Trainees are therefore able to read a summary of a previous PAL Session from their discipline area, see how PAL Leaders used particular facilitation/group learning techniques, and check

constructive feedback the Leader received. After reading through the observation form, trainees engage in group discussion and share their thoughts with other trainees from their course/school.

The PAL Coordination Team have also responded to leaders' comments by adding more role-play activities. Instead of having a group discussion about boundary setting as in previous years, trainees are encouraged to act out scenarios as Leaders to a pretend PAL group (made up of other trainees) and respond in an appropriate way (Appendix 1). So far groups have found this activity to be engaging and useful. By acting out a 'disruptive students' scenario for example, trainees are able to explore ways of dealing effectively with this kind of behaviour in their own PAL sessions. We are also planning to include an additional training session on assertiveness in order to help Leaders to manage disruptive students.

An activity related to critical incidents leaders are likely to face has also been introduced, including changing a timetabled PAL session if it is inconvenient for their group (Appendix 2). This attempts to address some of the general criticisms of PAL from first year students, including poor timetabling of sessions.

Another critical incident scenario encourages students to explore their options for planning sessions when no assignments are due, or when their PAL group is unable to suggest ideas for the next session. This responds to first year students' feedback relating to poor structure and planning of some PAL sessions. More emphasis is also being given on allowing trainees to reflect to the whole group as to why they feel planning and structure is important, especially after they have experienced running their simulated PAL session.

#### **Further modifications to training for 2012/13**

The initial training has also been modified for 2012/13 to complement the University's changing culture. The University's commitment to instilling a coaching and mentoring ethos across the University is reflected with an additional session focusing on coaching skills incorporated into day one. The Student Union has been invited to the second day of training as visiting speakers in recognition of their value and importance.

#### **Conclusion**

One of the great strengths of PAL lies in its flexibility. It can be adapted to various learning environments and academic disciplines. Any training provided has to be equally flexible. PAL retains its principles established by its founders over a decade ago but the scheme has expanded and developed in response to student feedback, changing learning technology and the evolving ethos of the University. PAL Leader training has also gradually evolved but its core aims remain unchanged (Fleming 2007). In order to support PAL in a blended environment, guidance on using the VLE to support PAL has been incorporated for example. In response to feedback, initial training incorporates more course



specific elements and has been streamlined where possible.

The concept of modelling continues to be fundamental to the training. Trainers employ small group learning techniques and frequently re-direct questions encouraging Leaders to reflect and formulate their own answers first. Leaders will in turn, always be able to apply these approaches in their own sessions.

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## List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Boundary Setting Role Play Activity

Appendix 2: Critical Incidents Activity

### Appendix 1: Boundary Setting Role Play Activity

Incident	How could you best deal with this?
1. You are running your first PAL session and your students ask you whether or not PAL is compulsory.	
2. Only a couple of students are participating in group discussions.	
3. Your students don't see the point of identifying and discussing the key issues that have been presented in their lectures during the past week.	
4. Your students have received their first assignment and want you to tell them what to put in it.	

5. Two of your students are aware that you did a similar assignment last year. They want to have a look at your assignment to get some ideas on how to structure theirs.	
6. One of your students is uncertain whether her completed assignment is of an appropriate academic standard. She asks you to read it and make suggestions.	
7. A student wants to borrow the list of references from one of your essays. She says that it will help her understand how to reference properly.	
8. The group is reluctant to suggest topics for discussion in PAL sessions and want you to decide what should be covered.	
9. Although you agree topics for discussion in advance with your group each week, very few of the students turn up with the relevant notes or resources to enable useful discussions to take place.	
10. Some students are being disruptive and ruining the session for others.	
11. A student comes to you at the end of the PAL session and asks if they can talk something through with you.	
12. An attractive member of your PAL group asks you out for a drink.	
13. Students rarely share ideas or participate in discussions and persist in wanting to hear answers from you.	
14. Members of your group rarely come to PAL with news items of their own and are overly dependent on you for this information.	

## Appendix 2: Critical Incidents Activity

Incident	How could you best deal with this?
1. The timetabled PAL Session is not at a convenient time for your group (i.e. scheduled on their day off).	
2. Subgroups start forming and there are clear divides in the group.	
3. There is an assignment set that is different to what you were assigned last year and a student asks you to explain it	
4. You think your co-PAL Leader is giving wrong information to the group.	
5. You are feeling unwell and are unable to run your next PAL Session.	
6. One student isn't engaging/participating.	
7. Your PAL Session is timetabled in a Lecture Theatre.	
8. Your PAL Group was unable to suggest ideas for the next session and you can't think of anything relevant to cover.	
9. Attendance at your sessions is very low.	
10. Your students don't have any assignments due and say that, as a consequence, they don't think there is any point in meeting for their PAL Sessions until their next assignment is set.	

11. A student in your PAL group tells you about an online reference generator and says it's much easier than referring to the BU Harvard Referencing Guide.	
12. Other PAL Leaders from your course are struggling to come up with ideas for their PAL Sessions and ask you for help	
13. The discussion you are leading goes off topic.	
14. A student asks you a question and you don't know the answer or are not entirely sure of the answer.	
15. There is a noticeable age difference between you and some members of your PAL Group, which is creating some awkwardness.	

## Facilitators and Barriers to the Development of PASS at the University of Brighton

Lucy Chilvers, Centre for Learning and Teaching, University of Brighton

Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) is a peer learning scheme involving student volunteers, typically from the second and third years, trained in leadership and facilitation skills to run weekly small group study sessions for 1<sup>st</sup> year students (Wallace 1995). Student attendees benefit from revisiting course material in a safe and supportive environment where they can ask questions and clarify understanding (Fostier & Carey 2007). Students who attend regularly have been shown to improve their course knowledge, confidence, independent learning skills and develop friendships on their course (Coe *et al.* 1999; Arendale 1994). Likewise, leaders also benefit by developing a wide range of leadership, communication and facilitation skills, boosting their confidence and developing into high calibre, employable graduates (Chilvers *et al.* 2012; Donelan 1999).

At this time of significant change in Higher Education (HE) (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills 2011), the increased provision for student support, with minimal demand on staff time, is hugely beneficial; PASS

is proving to enhance the quality of the student experience whilst also promoting a deeper engagement with the university, and independent study (Chilvers *et al.* 2012).

This paper focuses on facilitators and barriers to the development of PASS from the experience gained at the University of Brighton. PASS is coordinated centrally by the PASS team based in the Centre for Learning and Teaching, who work with a dedicated team of School and Course based PASS supervisors and administrators, and student PASS leaders.

PASS was first implemented at the University of Brighton in the academic year 2009/10, initially piloted in the School of Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences, and the School of Sport and Service Management, with a total of 22 PASS leaders. Through gradual and steady growth over the following years, 2012/13 saw approximately 139 PASS leaders trained to facilitate PASS sessions across 9 departments, making PASS available to approximately 1200 students. Table 1 gives a summary of the PASS schemes at Brighton in more detail:

Table 1: Details of PASS schemes at Brighton in 2012/13

Department/ School	Undergraduate Courses/ Modules PASS is embedded in	Number of Leaders	Number of Groups	Approx. number of students PASS is available to
Applied Social Sciences	Contemporary Social Inequalities core module	24	12	250
Business	Accountancy and Finance	10	5	85
	Finance and Investment	4	2	30
Computing, Engineering and Mathematics	Mathematics	9	4	65
Education	Education	12	4	30
	Primary Education	3	1	18

Health Professions	Podiatry	4	2	35
Humanities	Available to all courses - sign up	10	5	100
Pharmacy and Biomolecular Sciences	All courses including: Biomedical Science Biological Sciences Master of Pharmacy Chemistry Ecology Pharmaceutical and Chemical Sciences	40	20	350
Sport and Service Management	Sport Coaching and Development (top-up)	2 (paid post graduates)	1	25
	Sport and Exercise Science	6	3	100
Hastings Campus	Joint Honours programme subject strands:			
		6	3	30
	Biology	5	2	45
	Computing	2	1	25
	Education	2	1	12
	Mathematics			
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>139</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>1200</b>

### Facilitators of the development of PASS

#### *Strategic focus, impact and evaluation*

In the early stages of working alongside course teams to establish a new PASS scheme, having strategic goals such as seeking to improve the student experience, retention, attainment or class attendance are identified. This has been helpful in providing a focus for PASS evaluation which has proved important for securing funding. Since recently receiving Access Agreement retention and widening participation funding in 2012, the PASS team at the University of Brighton are currently conducting research into the impact of PASS on the retention, success and engagement of students who participate regularly.

#### *Raising the profile of PASS*

In order to generate interest about PASS across the institution, the PASS team work with students involved with PASS to co-present evaluation findings at a variety of internal committee meetings, staff workshops and the annual Learning and Teaching, and Pedagogic Research conferences. The PASS team's recent collaboration with the Student Union's Teaching Excellence Awards, in which PASS leaders and supervisors received nominations by their respective attendees and leaders, has been an exciting development which will no doubt continue to raise the profile of PASS.

#### *Student consultation*

PASS is primarily a student-owned and student-led initiative; therefore it is essential that students are involved in the implementation process. At the University of Brighton, students are consulted via meetings with course representatives or at the staff-

student liaison committees in order to establish the most appropriate modules or courses into which PASS can be embedded. Whilst retention and achievement data can be helpful in guiding implementation, it is the student interest and challenging course material that have proved most influential to the success of PASS pilots at Brighton.

#### *Academic staff endorsement*

PASS is a voluntary, opt-out model (Wallace 1995; Fostier & Carey 2007) and is included in first year students' timetables in order to encourage participation. If students perceive that their tutors consider PASS to be beneficial to their studies then this can have a positive influence on students' attendance at sessions. Whilst an academic staff champion leads the promotion of the scheme, it is important that the whole course teaching team are aware of and endorse PASS to students. This can be challenging to get everyone on board but information and discussion sessions that demystify PASS, and demonstrate to course teams the support from Heads of School and Course Leaders have been helpful for this purpose.

### Barriers to the development of PASS

#### *Perceptions of PASS*

PASS intends to project a positive, proactive, developmental image in which students of all abilities can gain something from engaging with PASS. The PASS model aims to target high risk course material, as opposed to high risk students (Wallace 1995). However some students can still misunderstand this and perceive PASS to be a remedial intervention and thus avoid sessions (Blunt 2008). We are careful in how PASS is introduced to students and have found that PASS

leaders explaining their own experiences of PASS from their first year is much more persuasive for enticing students to sessions. We have also found putting PASS on students' timetables subtly communicates to students that PASS is part of the course culture and all students are expected to benefit from engaging with it.

#### *Misunderstanding the leaders' role*

In PASS leader training at Brighton, there is a great deal of emphasis placed on the role of the leaders as facilitators of the learning process as opposed to re-teaching subject material. However this is a fine line to tread, especially when the leaders have experienced the course material themselves, so regular supervision is in place to help leaders to reflect on whether they are getting the right balance. Whilst the role of leaders is explained to first year students in PASS Induction sessions, this still proves to be a stumbling block for some students who struggle with the concept of the leaders not answering all their questions. We have found it most effective when leaders explain what their role and the purpose of PASS is at the start of PASS sessions for the first month, or whenever someone new attends, in order to manage expectations.

Similarly, we have found some academic staff have concerns about leaders teaching course material and potentially being wrong. The regular debriefs and observations that leaders have with PASS Supervisors has provided reassurance to academic staff with this.

#### *Resourcing*

The earlier stages of running PASS rely heavily on the good will and enthusiasm of staff championing the programme; but as PASS develops from the periphery to becoming mainstream in an institution, a more sustainable model is needed to support the expansion of the schemes. A variety of academic staff, student support tutors and administrators make up the School based staff PASS teams, and careful consideration needs to be given to the time and resources required for PASS to succeed. We have found it most effective to establish this resourcing structure right from the beginning of a PASS pilot in order to ensure a sustainable approach for the future.

#### *Organisation and logistics*

One of the most fundamental and challenging aspects of implementing PASS is the availability and booking of rooms for students to use. Despite PASS supervisors working closely with timetabling staff, finding enough rooms can often be a challenge. A creative approach at Brighton has helped in this situation with some students meeting in social spaces, booking library rooms or meeting outside when the weather permits.

#### **Summary**

A strong team of students and staff working in partnership within and across Schools and Central Departments is vital to the development and expansion of PASS across an institution. A variety of approaches are needed in order to address the range of factors that can facilitate and inhibit the development of PASS. Whilst the success of PASS hinges on a bottom-up approach, demonstrating and reinforcing the student-led ethos of the scheme, it seems that an influence from the top is also required for the structuring, funding and sustainable expansion of PASS. Ideally, as PASS becomes more embedded into an institution's culture, with the benefits to students evidenced by impact-evaluation research, it will become a valued priority for resourcing.

For more information please visit

<http://www.brighton.ac.uk/ask/pass>.

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## PAL Experience

Katrina Cole, University of Bedfordshire

I was first contacted about PAL just before the start of my second year. I am currently a third year computer security and forensics student, based on the Luton campus. I was emailed by Eve Rapley, the PAL Coordinator, advising that my name had been put forward to be a possible PAL leader. The email had a brief explanation of what PAL was. I was so curious I emailed her back straightaway and was booked in for an interview. We discussed PAL and the training that I would have to attend and what was needed throughout the year. The idea seemed very good so I agreed and my journey with PAL started. I originally wondered why I was selected for PAL. Reflecting back on my first year at University, I would have to say that it was probably because I was always helping others anyway, whether it was my colleagues in group work or if someone was just stuck. They would often come to me for help and I was more than happy to help them. I guess that the lecturers saw my helpfulness as well as a dogged determinedness would be good attributes for a PAL leader.

The PAL training took place over two days at both Luton and Bedford campuses and contained everything we should need to run PAL sessions throughout the year, along with some ideas for breaking the ice and what we could do for the initial PAL session. Training complete, we were handed over to our academic course contacts who would assist us throughout the year as well as setting up the PAL groups and assigning the PAL leaders. Our first contact with the students was at Induction. Dr Daly (academic course contact) introduced PAL to the first years and we briefly spoke about ourselves and how we would be assisting them throughout the year.

As the first session approached I was a little nervous but also excited to try something new. I think I understand how new teachers must feel, looking forward to helping people but with the small nagging doubt at the back of your head that students may not find what you say interesting or even useful. The disadvantage of not being a lecturer or tutor is that there is always the chance that the students will not listen or will be disrespectful, but I suppose that is a chance you take being a tutor as well.

Despite my nerves the first session went reasonably well. I could tell at the start who was going to be a problem and who would listen and take note. Nothing dreadful happened, no rotten fruit was thrown at me, and we established some guidelines for future sessions before I bid them farewell.

As the year progressed things did not always seem to go as I planned. Some of the students did not seem to want to engage, which I found very frustrating and even annoying. Putting work into some of the students did at times seem pointless and I was on the verge of giving up on numerous occasions. Then something happened that changed my mind and made me want to stay. Someone

said the advice I had given them was very helpful and thanked me for it. There is nothing quite like that feeling that someone has appreciated your advice, and even better, has found it helpful. Although PAL only ran over the first two terms I still saw my PAL group at university and they still asked me for my advice on exam revision and how they could get the best results. I took this as a great compliment rather than an intrusion on my examination revision, and even encouraged my fellow second years who were not PAL leaders to assist the first years.

### PAL Part Two: The Story Continues...

After I completed my first year as a PAL leader I have to say I felt a great sense of accomplishment and pride and even a little sad that my PAL journey had ended. I was, however, pleasantly surprised that this was not the case. At the end of the academic year, I and a few of my colleagues were contacted to see if we were able to assist with the training of the new PAL leaders.

I started assisting with the training for the new PAL leaders, which took place over two days just as the original training had, once at Bedford and once at Luton. I was surprised and pleased that PAL had grown so much and there were so many new PAL leaders joining the group and that more subject areas had joined our little club. The training went well and the enthusiasm was infectious and reminded me why I loved being part of PAL.

With the training complete, the new and battle worn but reinvigorated PAL leaders went out to help the new batch of first years. As had happened in the pilot programme, there were initial teething problems as PAL bedded in and the new batch of first years met their new PAL leaders and the sessions started again.

The problems from this year do seem to be slightly different from last year but the rewards are the same. The first time a new student smiles and realises that they are not alone and that there are fellow students willing to help them without judging. One of the benefits of this year is that the first years get the benefit of not only the second years' experiences but also of the third years'. This gives them a unique perspective of what they can expect in years 2 and 3. This can be really useful when students are struggling and cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Overall PAL has proved to be a very positive experience and I have gained a number of skills that will prove to be very beneficial in the future. For example, I am now more confident when presenting to a large group of people and have found I can communicate more effectively to people at all levels, from first and second years to academics. In my opinion PAL is very beneficial to all concerned, whether you are a PAL leader, a participant in the PAL group, or even a lecturer.

## PAL at UoB!

Eve Rapley, Centre for Learning Excellence, University of Bedfordshire

As the academic year draws to a close, the inevitable period of reflection and evaluation begins in order to inform, shape and to refresh for the coming year. For the Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) team it will be to look at the University of Bedfordshire PAL scheme and to assess what went well, what was less effective and to plan for September 2013. I am delighted to be able to do this against a backdrop of experiences of PAL from colleagues at Brighton and at Bournemouth, as well as from one of our own PAL leaders.

The University of Bedfordshire PAL scheme began in 2011. Modelled using the Bournemouth scheme as described by Steve Parton and Victoria Noad, its key aims are to help new students:

- Adjust quickly to university life;
- Acquire a clear view of course direction and expectations;
- Develop their independent learning and study skills to meet the requirements of higher education;
- Enhance their understanding of the subject matter of their course through collaborative discussion;
- Prepare better for assessed work and examinations (Fleming, 2008).

Under the leadership of Hugh Fleming, the Bournemouth model is one that many UK universities have opted to use as their template for PAL. It was adopted at the University of Bedfordshire in order to complement and support our own unique and distinct student population, with an emphasis very much on socialising, supporting and nurturing new students prior to taking on a more course curriculum directed emphasis. Whilst the PASS scheme run by Lucy Chilvers at Brighton has a more nuanced course content emphasis, it is both gratifying and heartening to see how we all share many successes and how the trials and tribulations encountered here have also been experienced at other universities. Indeed, in the true spirit of peer learning and empathy, knowing that we are not alone, that there are those who have experienced what we have, is a great source of reassurance to the team who run the scheme here at Bedfordshire. It also serves to remind us that, despite its relative infancy, the Bedfordshire scheme is progressing, evolving and making a real difference to the experiences of both new students and to those students who facilitate PAL sessions.

This issue of the *Journal of Pedagogic Development* (JPD), with its special PAL feature, is testament to PAL's increasing prominence as a vehicle for supporting and developing new students within the university sector. Far from being parochial and lacking any theoretical underpinnings, the notion of student led and student owned learning opportunities is increasingly gaining credibility and respect within the sector. Since the first

PAL scheme was set up by Kingston University in the early 1990s, student to student support schemes have flourished. Indeed, in their 2011 HEFCE funded major review of student mentoring programmes in UK universities, Andrews & Clark (2011) found that there are currently 340 peer mentoring programmes operating across 159 universities, figures that account for 86% of UK universities.

One might wonder what took the sector so long to realise the value of harnessing the all important and, to us as academics, inaccessible and unique 'insider knowledge' that only current students can provide to those new to the institution. It has been twenty years since Soo Hoo (1993: 386–393) suggested how 'educators have forgotten the important connection between teachers and students. We listen to outside experts to inform us, and consequently overlook the treasure in our very own backyards – the students.'

The notion of experienced students as a resource to enhance student learning and development is not new. Indeed, the social constructionist and socio-cultural theoretical underpinnings of PAL proposed by Vygotsky with his use of a More Knowing Other (MKO) to help students navigate through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD; Vygotsky 1978) neatly contextualises why PAL can be so effective in supporting new and inexperienced students.

At a time when the student voice and the student experience have never been such prominent items on the institutional agenda of every higher education institution (HEI), it is worth remembering that our students are our partners and, as such, have an important part to play in developing the atmosphere and culture within the university.

Noel *et al.* (1995: 1-27) suggests that 'to make the first year student connection, institutions must adopt the concept of 'front loading', putting the strongest, most student centred people, programmes and services during the first year'. This approach is undoubtedly common to both PAL and PASS, and is something the University of Bedfordshire strives to do in order to improve the transition of new students into the institution. PAL is a major part of this, by providing a regular and safe opportunity for new students to share thoughts, ideas, fears and anxieties with an experienced and approachable student who has been in their shoes. Not every student comes to university equipped and socially confident enough to plunge themselves headfirst into their new academic life. Yorke & Longden (2004: 137) suggest 'for some students, a sense of belonging will develop as a matter of course; for others this may not happen unless the institution makes an effort'. The PAL/PASS schemes at Bedfordshire, Brighton and Bournemouth all recognise the importance of using its leaders as a means of offering new students a lifeline or an anchor point; a means of setting their compass

course, as well as fixing their allegiance to their new institution. Early cementing of friendships and connections with peers and staff within the institution is a vital means of lessening the risk of 'difficult adjustment' and 'social isolation' (Tinto 1975) impacting upon the student experience (and ultimately upon student retention). That said, PAL/PASS should not be considered a panacea for all student ills; rather it should be viewed as one of a series of measures embedded into the institutional fabric as a means of supporting new students into their new academic lives.

The defining character of the Bedfordshire PAL scheme is that of its focus upon not just problem resolution and socialising, but of developing a community of practice (CoP). Using the works of Lave & Wenger (1991) to influence and develop the scheme, PAL is a place for 'groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly'. Like colleagues at Bournemouth and Brighton, we believe that having timetabled PAL sessions goes a long way to signalling the importance of PAL to both students and staff, as well as decreasing the risk of PAL being inaccurately badged as being a 'deficit model' (Andrews & Clark 2011: 9) or a place to go 'only if you are stuck'. We aspire for PAL to be more than this; for it to be a place where burgeoning scholars can start to explore and interrogate the literature of their subject in order to begin to (as coined by our own PAL Leaders) 'walk the walk and talk the talk' of their discipline.

Those who are instrumental in developing a CoP for PAL are, of course, our PAL Leaders. I am sure colleagues at Brighton and at Bournemouth would endorse the claim that the success of any PAL/PASS scheme is directly attributed to its PAL/PASS Leaders. Whilst PAL staff might be considered as being back stage crew, it is the PAL/PASS Leaders who are the principal actors; the ones who create an environment of mutual trust, respect, support and fellowship where new students have the opportunity to talk, share and learn.

Whilst literature tends to focus on how peer assisted learning enhances the experience for first year students, it is imperative not to ignore or underplay the impact it has upon those facilitating PAL sessions. Having read the eloquent story of Katrina Cole, one of our own PAL Leaders, it is hugely gratifying to learn of the 'accomplishment and pride' that PAL has been engendered within her. As well as impacting positively upon her students, discovering how PAL has improved Katrina's own communication skills and personal confidence provides compelling evidence of the win-win nature of PAL in terms of benefits for both participants and facilitators. Feedback from many of our PAL Leaders has consistently supported the view of Petrey (2012: 17-31) who suggests how 'transformative learning takes place because peer facilitators emerge with a greater awareness of their own learning and the context of learning as a social activity'.

Developing our PAL leaders is key to the Bedfordshire PAL scheme and is an element we will be working to

improve in the coming academic year via the introduction of cross departmental peer observation and the provision of additional training workshops. Like Steve Parton and Victoria Noad at Bournemouth with their BU Student Development Award, we have teamed up with colleagues from our own careers colleagues to enable PAL Leaders the opportunity to develop their employability skills via the Bedfordshire Edge award. A fledgling enterprise during 2012/2013, we endeavour to make this more of a focus for the new academic year.

Like colleagues at Brighton and at Bournemouth, the undoubted 'Achilles heel' for PAL is that of timetabling. Evidence from the sector is clear that PAL at the 'wrong time' will significantly impact upon PAL participation. We certainly fell foul of this during the pilot phase of the PAL scheme with PAL sessions being timetabled on days when no other scheduled classes were taking place. Whilst we've endeavoured to 'timetable smarter' during this academic year, with a significantly higher number of PAL sessions to timetable, there have inevitably been some groups that have been left with the 'graveyard' timeslots. With a planned university wide roll out by 2014/2015, the team are undoubtedly going to face increased pressure to circumvent the timetabling issues. However, with four newly installed PAL Faculty Co-ordinators and four Associate Deans (Student Experience), the profile of PAL will continue to rise within the institution, something which will inevitably improve its standing, as well as further embedding PAL into the institutional culture of the University of Bedfordshire.

What is evident from the articles by Katrina Cole, Lucy Chilvers and by Steve Parton & Victoria Noad, is that despite the perennial problems with timetabling, concerns over student attendance and staff misconceptions, and a lack of PAL staff recognition and time, the concept of PAL/PASS and its power to reassure, nurture, inspire and to transform cannot be ignored. As stated by Green (2007: 2), 'a well functioning society is bound together by shared beliefs and values that are transmitted from one generation to the next by informal educators'. To use London 2012 as an analogy, the PAL/PASS Leaders from Bedfordshire, Brighton and Bournemouth are our torchbearers, our gamesmakers, those who prepare the ground by welcoming, inducting and developing new students into the culture that is unique to every institution. This involves acculturating them into the language, norms and customs of the institution, smoothing their path into their new life as an undergraduate. By de-mystifying 'university speak', by developing friends and contacts and by developing confidence, PAL/PASS provides a unique community environment which is 'for students and by students' and one which helps give new students a foothold into a new institution.

As we at Bedfordshire look towards our third year of running PAL, we do so with great optimism and determination to build upon our successes in order to foster a strong sense of attachment, alliance and



guidance (Weiss 1969) to all new students at the University.

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## Book Reviews

### Learning at Not-School

Julian Sefton-Green

The MIT Press (2013)

Review by David Mathew

While some people might disagree that 'it is universally acknowledged across the social spectrum that schools in and of themselves are not the end-all and be-all of education' (the word *universally* is particularly worrisome), it is nonetheless fair to accept that as time progresses, more and more alternatives to a traditional, classroom-based, face-to-face learning experience have become available. These alternatives are what the author terms 'learning in Not-School' experiences, where we learn in not-school environments such as after-school programmes, youth clubs, or on the Web.

This is an interesting idea for a short book of 92 pages, but I do wish that the editing and proofreading had been more robust. However interested one is in a subject, the tightrope of reader interest can be easily twanged by something like the following paragraph (from page 23), which I quote at length.

The 'learner in not-school settings is theorized in two important ways: in respect of their (*sic*) interest, enthusiasm, and motivation, and along an a (*sic*) emotional axis in terms of their relationships with others, especially adults. The former focus in a sense posits the figure of the learner as possessing agency and individual choice that is frequently denied in other settings. Yet the latter focus is often preoccupied with deficits, with the absence of parenting figures in young people's lives and the needs of the young for support and security.'

These sentences are, unfortunately, not alone: this is but one of the book's paragraphs that obliges the reader

to auto-correct errors as he goes along. On plenty of occasions I found myself re-reading a gobblet, mentally painting in the correct punctuation, or smoothing out an imbalanced phrase. And while I fully accept that a book should be the reader's work as much as the writer's, I cannot help feeling that for want of a sterner editorial eye *Learning at Not-School* would have constituted a more enriching reading experience. A pity.

### Education in Prison: Studying through distance learning

Emma Hughes

Ashgate Publishing Limited (2012)

Review by Llian Alys

Every year, an estimated 4,000 prisoners study through distance learning (Schuller 2009). Due to staffing, financial and other resource implications, most prison education departments can only focus on basic skills and therefore distance learning<sup>1</sup> offers the 'educated'<sup>2</sup> prisoner opportunities to continue their learning career (Hodkinson 2004; cited by Hughes 2010). Despite interest in the association between education and crime (e.g. Groot & van den Brink 2010), prison-based education and prison-based distance learning in particular have not received much research attention (Hughes 2012). The small body of work in this area is growing however as evidenced by *Education in Prison*. This book presents the findings of Hughes' qualitative study of prisoners' experiences of distance learning in

<sup>1</sup> Often, this requires the prisoner to fund his or her own education, though some academic institutions (e.g. the Open University) may offer fee waivers or funding for prisoners and the charity, the Prisoners' Education Trust, offers grants for distance learning.

<sup>2</sup> Not all prisoners who undertake distance learning are educated (or seek to be educated) to university level; some may have completed the prison-run learning programmes and may be seeking to gain secondary education qualifications.

prison (funded by Birmingham City University and the Prisoners' Education Trust). From a pool of nine prisons, 76 respondents who had undertaken courses funded by the Prisoners' Education Trust completed questionnaires, and 47 were also interviewed about distance learning and its unique benefits (e.g. variety of topics, expert tutelage) and challenges (e.g. motivation, independent learning).

In Chapter 1 (Introduction), Hughes provides a brief summary of research and policy concerning prison education and sets the scene for the research (describing the political landscape at the time and the methodology of the study). Chapters 2 and 3, respectively, examine the personal and institutional factors which 'push' prisoners towards distance learning and those which 'pull' them away from education. Chapter 4 explores the interaction between education and identity — how education influences self-perceptions and how self-perceptions can also sabotage the learning process. In contrast to Chapter 4's focus on the self, Chapter 5 turns to the other actors in the learner's life (both within and outside prison and including family, friends, fellow prisoners and prison staff) and how they can impact on the learning process and how this learning may influence the prisoner's wider network and environment. Chapter 6 focuses on the future — how learning and education may impact aspirations, direction, opportunities and identities post-release. The final Chapter 7 (the Conclusion) draws together the threads in the previous chapters and makes a number of policy suggestions for encouraging engagement with education in prison.

The book is written in a clear and engaging manner with consistent signposting to themes and chapters. Hughes makes good use of quotations and refers to supportive theoretic and research evidence when appropriate. Surprisingly, given the overall quality of the book, the discussion of methodology is limited. For example, no information is given regarding the questionnaire items and the interview questions and therefore the quotes provided are decontextualised. It is interesting that the author refers to the importance of context in relation to decisions to study or not but does not refer to how the context of the interview may have influenced responding. While Hughes admits in the introduction that the 'students' stories have inevitably been filtered and shaped by myself, and my role as a researcher in developing, participating and influencing the overall process cannot be ignored' (p. 10), little reflection is undertaken on this issue.

Hughes' work is a valuable reminder that behind each statistic is a person and that behind each enrolment (or not) on an educational course, there are multiple personal, social and environmental determining factors. The strength of this book is bringing to life the educational histories of these individuals and allowing us to learn from their failures, false starts and (most importantly) their successes. If you are interested in facilitating the learning of disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups, this book will be of interest to

you. While Hughes makes links between prison-based education and adult learning in the community, there are also parallels with learning in a widening access institution. I am in no way implying that students at the University of Bedfordshire are criminals or that they will one day continue their education behind bars... However, they may have very similar educational life histories to Hughes' participants. For example, some may come from families or communities with a 'counter-school culture' (Willis 1977) or no previous experience of higher education. Some may have had negative experiences at school (being more interested in friends than in education and experiencing conflicts with teachers) and others may have had an undiagnosed learning disorder which they feel held them back. Most importantly and I would argue, most commonly, many may lack academic confidence. To 'push' towards education, Hughes, or rather her interviewees, emphasise the importance of having a subject of interest and a suitable learning approach, of deconstructing psychological barriers to learning and building up academic confidence and self-esteem (elements embedded within our University's Cre8 framework). The prisoners' narratives also include some cautionary advice. They demonstrate how institutional policies and attitudes and those of other prisoners and staff can undermine self-confidence and motivation to engage in education. Students and staff can also inadvertently create an environment unsupportive of learning by focussing on the outcome (grades) to the exclusion of the learning process (development of transferable skills). It can also be challenging for the staff member balancing numerous responsibilities to focus upon what is important — facilitating the students' learning experience — and this may be evident to students. The University of Bedfordshire goes to great lengths to demonstrate the value and importance it places on the learner's experience and its commitment to education but this diligence must be continuously monitored and maintained.

To conclude, this book is not a 'good practice' guide or evaluation of current interventions in prison, but provides an insight into the diverse experiences of learners (whether they are prisoners or not). It demonstrates the life-changing capacity of education to restore 'spoiled identities' and form 'new' and valued ones (Hughes 2012) and if nothing more, is therefore an inspiration to teacher practitioners. It is up to the reader to determine whether and how they can make best use of this insight in their own role.

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### **Innovations in Mobile Educational Technologies and Applications**

David Parsons

IGI Global (2013)

Review by Herbert Daly

Applying mobile computing technologies to support education has been a strong theme in research for the broader fields of Education and Information Systems. This new title from *IGI Global* brings together a comprehensive collection of studies which frames and illuminates this new area. The collection, of 20 studies in total, is based on research from a variety of universities around the world, though work from European institution predominates. The four sections of the book address different aspects of mobile learning; the first section looks at established research directions, the second examines design solutions and theoretical frameworks, the third focuses on solution development, while the fourth section looks at the evaluation of different applications.

Section one, *Mobile Learning Research Directions*, frames recent m-learning research strands from different perspectives. Traxler's chapter (Chapter 1), for example, identifies some achievements so far in the field from the perspective of a researcher conscious of the field's rapid development from its recent inception. By contrast, Vas & Kismihok (Chapter 4) examine the perceptions of students who have experienced m-learning about its effectiveness. Wingkvist & Ericsson (Chapter 2) look in detail at methods applied in mobile learning studies, surveying and evaluating more than one hundred studies to provide a summary of established research techniques and approaches.

Section two, *Mobile Learning Design Solutions and Theoretical Frameworks*, looks at successful activities in the m-learning space with the intent to isolate design features of effective studies. Three of the studies, Chapters 7, 8 and 9, focus on audio m-learning applications, examining case studies and guidelines in the area. Chapter 5 (Eliasson *et al.*) looks at guidelines for design of collaborative exercises, identifying the device focussed approach as a possible distraction from an interactive learning experience, and strategies to address this. Coens *et al.* (Chapter 9) look at distraction from a different view point studying the relative effectiveness of students multitasking in an m-learning context. These studies suggest frameworks for design solutions as well as the effective use the technology.

Section three, *Mobile Learning Solution Development*, which contains only three chapters, looks at approaches to developing solutions informed by the needs of the educational problem being addressed. Seisto *et al.* (Chapter 11) provide a case study of a hybrid book project where users where involved in the design project. Ekanayake & Wishart (Chapter 12) examine an example from Sri Lanka where mobile camera phones where used in field work focusing on the different tasks

and interactions this facilitated. The third, Nouri *et al.* focuses on collaborative approach of students working in groups on a maths project using the well known *Activity System Model* as the main theoretical framework for analysis of the case study.

The fourth section, *Evaluating Mobile Learning Interventions*, provides an extensive look at the evaluation of mobile learning studies and practice, comprising seven chapters. Studies typically focus on different groups of students and whether the m-learning experience has proven effective for them. Soon (Chapter 18) focuses on the experiences of distance learners using combined e-learning and m-learning resources to complete a project. Their perceptions are examined using a qualitative approach to develop a framework of success factors for this group. Gwee *et al.* (Chapter 16) look at the role of gender in a mobile game based exercise, looking at the time spent by different groups on a high school project and the outcomes for them in terms of learning and achievement. Bradley and Holley (Chapter 20) look the attitudes a group of students have to their mobile phones together with case studies for how three different students make use of their phones around their learning environment. Cochrane (Chapter 14) reflects on four years of action research studies looking a mobile web based technologies proved to cohorts on different degree courses, presenting student evaluations of their experiences

All in all, this very good book offers access to a sound collection of studies which could support the work of both experienced and novice researchers. The references from each of the chapters provide a valuable source of important theoretical references as well as key contributions to the field. Some of my more advanced undergraduate project students were able to use it to support their project work and gage popular themes as well as the state of the art in this area. It is a good addition to a library where the practical nuts and bolts of platforms and implementation can sometimes predominate. This book provides valuable perspective on previous work and offers foundations to explore new territory.

### **Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: a Handbook of Method**

Tom Boellstorff, Bonnie Nardi, Celia Pearce & T. L. Taylor  
Princeton University Press (2012)

Review by Mitul Shukla

This book is approximately A5 in size and made up of around 240 pages. Overall this was a pleasant read in a subject area that is somewhat off the beaten track. That said, I really would have liked to have read this book maybe three of four years ago when it could have greatly assisted me in my doctoral studies. However, it is still a timely piece of work when we take into account the continued growth of virtual worlds, especially with brands such as Xbox and Playstation using these technologies to garner a sense of community amongst their customer base. This is an excellent primer within the fields of virtual worlds as well as ethnography, but

moreover about conducting an ethnographic study within virtual worlds.

This book is made up of 12 chapters. 1. *Why this handbook?* 2. *Three brief histories.* 3. *Ten myths about ethnography.* 4. *Research design and preparation.* 5. *Participant observation in virtual worlds.* 6. *Interviews and virtual worlds' research.* 7. *Other data collection methods of virtual worlds' research.* 8. *Ethics.* 9. *Human subjects clearance and institutional review boards.* 10. *Data analysis.* 11. *Writing up, presenting and publishing ethnographic research.* 12. *Conclusion: arrivals and new departures.*

#### Chapter 1 (p.1):

'As ethnographers, what interests us about virtual worlds is not what is extraordinary about them, but what is ordinary. We are intrigued not only by the individuals in a group, but by the sum of the parts. We aim to study virtual worlds as valid venues for cultural practice, seeking to understand both how they resemble and how they differ from other forms of culture. We do this by immersing our embodied selves within the cultures of interest, even when that embodiment is in the form of an avatar, the representation of self in these spaces. The goal of this handbook is to provide ethnographers with a practical set of tools and approaches for conducting successful fieldwork in virtual worlds.'

The four authors of this book have a solid history in this type of research across a variety of virtual worlds. Their works are highlighted in the first chapter as well as interspersed throughout the rest of this book as examples of a salient point.

I was pleased to see the authors acknowledging the many disciplines that may be interested in this type of handbook from sociologists and anthropologists through to computer science sub-disciplines. Unfortunately a fair amount of ink is used in defining and explaining the handbook format of this work. While this is understandable in the sense of contextualisation and in explaining why some areas are not covered in great detail but in essence, I felt these issues were somewhat extended.

The authors go on to say:

'to frame our discussion, we describe virtual worlds as possessing the following characteristics. First, they are places and have a sense of worldness. They are not just spatial representations but offer an object rich environment that participants can traverse and with which they can interact. Second, virtual worlds are multi-user in nature; they exist as shared social environments with synchronous communication and interaction. While participants may engage in solitary activities within them, virtual worlds live through co- inhabitation with others. Third, they are persistent: they continue to exist in some form even as participants log off. They can

thus change while one participant is absent, based on the platform itself or the activities of other participants. Fourth, virtual worlds allow participants to embody themselves, usually as avatars (even if 'textual avatars' as in text only virtual worlds such as MUDs), such that they can explore and participate in the virtual world'.

One of my only slight disappointments with this chapter was the fact that the authors chose initially not to distinguish between social and game virtual worlds. However this is a legacy issue from my own research interests rather than any intrinsic problem with what the authors of this handbook were actually writing.

Chapter 2 provides histories of ethnography and virtual worlds as well as the history of ethnography as a practice in virtual worlds.

With regard to ethnography, the distinction is made between the movement to describe the world in terms of encyclopaedias during the 18th century and the use of ethnography as a more detailed perspective on situated accounts of specific cultures. Here the authors also discuss positivism, essentially that the world can be described in terms of generalised laws. This applies also to human experiences.

It is interesting to note that originally field work was done by the likes of traders, explorers and missionaries. In the mean-while the intellectual high ground was taken by scholars using those self-same field reports. This state of affairs started to change with the work of Malinowski (p.15), who is described here as 'the single most pivotal figure in the history of ethnography'.

The authors then go on to describe a variety of perspectives, practices and terminology, in particular structuralism, post colonialism, and feminism are discussed as well as the contributions of many scholars, Weber of course making an appearance when sociology is discussed.

It was particularly interesting to see a section describing the similarities and distinctions between ethnographers and journalists.

The section about the history of virtual worlds weaves together nicely an account of science fiction fantasy literature multiplayer and single play games throughout history as well as the early computer multi-user dungeon types of text based adventure games and early graphic games such as Pong.

This account goes on then to describe Lucasfilm's *Habitat* described here as the very first virtual world, with an account of many other virtual worlds such as *There*, *The Sims Online*, *Second Life*, *Eve Online*, *Ultima*, *Mine Craft* and so on.

The third history given here is that of scholarly activity within virtual worlds and this section provides many reference points for the reader to follow up on if they so choose. Indeed, the authors even point out that many

breadcrumbs have been left for the reader to follow up upon in this chapter to further their own personal knowledge.

Chapter 3 gives a considered and logical argument as to what the authors call the 10 myths of ethnography. These being:

- Ethnography is unscientific.
- Ethnography is less valid than quantitative research.
- Ethnography is simply anecdotal.
- Ethnography is undermined by subjectivity.
- Ethnography is merely intuitive.
- Ethnography is writing about your personal experience.
- Ethnographers contaminate field sites by their very presence.
- Ethnography is the same as grounded theory.
- Ethnography is the same as an ethno-methodology.
- Ethnography will become obsolete.

Here the authors help the reader to clarify and frame the use of ethnography, this is especially important when we take into account that ethnography does not follow the standard hypothesis driven model of science.

For example, with regard to contaminating field sites, here the authors quote Malinowski (p.44):

‘...as the natives saw me constantly every day, they ceased to be interested or alarmed, or made self-conscious by my presence, and I ceased to be a disturbing element in the tribal life which I was to study’. With this quote as a stepping off point the authors argue essentially that by becoming part of the environment the ethnographer ceases to be an element of novelty or alarm. Rather the ethnographer becomes a newcomer. And as such, the authors argue, ‘what insiders think newcomers should know about their culture tells us a great deal about what is important to them’.

Therefore the authors recognise that while ethnographers may impact upon the people that they study, that affect is one that all cultures through history have accepted: that of a newcomer who stays.

While it was enjoyable to read this chapter there were some aspects of it that were simply seemed too brief. In fairness the handbook format of this book did preclude an extended narrative on some of these matters.

Chapter 4 is based around the notion that ‘the most fundamental, consequential, and personal step in designing an ethnographic project is choosing the question we seek to answer’ (p.52).

Here three principals are elaborated upon: emergence, relevance, and personal interest.

Formulating a research question within the current context of the plethora of information that exists, especially with regard to ethnography as well as to

virtual worlds, can be difficult. The authors therefore give a brief history of some of the research questions with which they began their own ethnographic research.

Emergence here is related to the concept of the ethnographer as an explorer. While simultaneously acknowledging that ethnography itself is an emergent process. Interestingly cross disciplinary or interdisciplinary research questions should not be avoided.

This chapter also gives an excellent description as to the relevance and merit of a good literature review.

Here also, the importance of passion and the personal interest of the researcher is highlighted. This is something which is rarely found in research handbooks of this nature and is as refreshing as it is insightful to read.

This chapter then proceeds to enlighten the reader on matters such as the scope of the field site and the attending to off-line contexts.

Chapter 5. The authors deem participant observation as a fundamental method to the ethnographic approach. Primarily this is so as it allows the researcher to step into the social frame of the participants. This is equally so within the realms of virtual worlds.

Within this chapter the authors discourse upon embodied participation as well as subject position. Subject position here is interpreted from the researchers’ personal position of membership from within the group being investigated.

This chapter, then, goes on to explain the history and practice of participant observation in an ethnographic research study. This is achieved by the narrative being broken into smaller sections. These sections focus on issues such as: observation practice, the research self, initiating relationships, the making of mistakes, extensive field notes, data organisation, participant observation and ethnographic knowledge, timing, and experimentation with attitude.

For example, the section about ‘the research self’ offers advice on the practicalities of conducting ethnographic research within a virtual world environment. The advice given regarding initiating relationships in a virtual world environment is focused more on issues of rapport and trust building within the group being studied.

(The second half of Mitul Shukla’s review will appear in the November issue of the *JPD* – Eds.)

### **Evaluating e-Learning: Guiding Research and Practice**

Rob Phillips, Carmel McNaught and Gregor Kennedy  
Routledge (2012)

Review by Mark Gamble

Published in 2012, *Evaluating e-Learning: Guiding Research and Practice* joins the four other books in Routledge’s widely-respected ‘Connecting with e-

Learning' series. Comprising three parts, Setting the Scene, Theory and Practical Aspects of Evaluation Research, the book sets out to address common concerns for those academics attempting to come to grips with learning online in support of a traditional curriculum. Part One briefly addresses questions regarding the extent to which, if at all, e-learning differs from learning and explains why it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies we adopt, especially in the online context.

Part Two explores a theoretical approach based around the authors' not unreasonable premise that 'Students learn within learning environments, going through learning processes in order to achieve learning outcomes' (pg 22) and hence at the heart of the book, as explained at the start of Part Two, is a model called the LEPO (Learning Environment, Processes, Outcomes) framework. Building on the work of Biggs (1989), Laurillard (2002), Bain (1999), Reeves and Reeves (1997) and Goodyear (Ellis and Goodyear, 2010) provides a very helpful generalized and integrated conceptual framework for learning that facilitates a rigorous approach to evaluating and researching learning online.

For early researchers, or those coming fresh to the idea of research, Chapter Five provides a very approachable guidance to Research Paradigms and Methodologies leading the reader into discussion of a range of approaches of evaluation research that would be

appropriate in the field of e-learning and closing Part Two.

In the final five chapters that comprise Part Three, the authors offer ideas addressing the practical aspects of evaluation research. Over the course of 180 pages, the reader is offered clear, relevant, suggestions for the practical application of theory, starting, of course, with planning your evaluation-research activity and moving on to considering research across the life-cycle of an online learning experience. This might be as small an activity as evaluating the effectiveness of the use of a discussion online to address a particularly key concept, right up to a fully distance delivery course and anything in-between. Increasingly, it is going to be a requirement that we take an evaluative approach to our use of BREO and its components and this book will prove highly valuable as an inspiration and a guide.

The authors remind us that it is not the technology that does the learning, it is the students. They remind us that when we take decisions to implement a particular approach to the curriculum that uses technology, the learning outcomes are the result of the learning processes we provide for our students and that the learning environment – the BREO units we build for our students to learn in – can moderate and mediate those processes in ways that we must seek to understand through evaluative research in order to make sure the learning actually happens. This is one book that can help make that task very much easier: highly recommended.

## Special Feature Citation and Integrity

### Celebrate Citation: Flipping the Pedagogy of Plagiarism in Qatar

Molly McHarg, Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar

#### Abstract:

Educators and administrators at American branch campuses in Qatar continually find themselves distraught by the number of academic integrity violations each semester. Despite dire warnings and life-changing sanctions, students continue to breach the honour codes at their respective institutions. This article offers one possible solution by transforming the pedagogy of plagiarism into a positive teaching opportunity in the classroom.

**Keywords:** plagiarism, academic integrity, international students, citation

*Plagiarism, academic integrity violations, idea theft, stealing, punishable behaviour, expulsion...*

These are all words and phrases that are repeated throughout first-year student orientations at all the universities in Education City, an area in Qatar that hosts six branch campuses of American universities. At the beginning of each semester, faculty members, Deans,

and other top-level administrators stand in front of the new cohorts of freshmen and extol the virtues of conducting ethical research, avoiding plagiarism, and pursuing academic excellence with integrity. Students leave the sessions weary and wounded, feeling as though they have had the lectures pounded into them. Inevitably, these same institutions have seen a large percentage of honour code violations, with anecdotal reports ranging from two to over fifty violations at various institutions per semester. The problematic nature of this phenomenon has led to the development of a task force, comprised of deans from all the schools, who have gathered together to brainstorm more meaningful and successful measures to combating plagiarism.

I have worked at various institutions around Education City for over seven years, as a teaching faculty and writing centre instructor. Consequently, I have been well-positioned to see a wide variety of different students with a wide variety of different educational backgrounds. Based on my experience, I can report with

confidence that it is almost always a case of lack of clear instruction and practice rather than malicious intent resulting in violations of academic integrity. Arguably, these branch campuses struggle more with these challenges than their U.S. counterparts due to the greater international diversity of the student population. This is not to say that international students are plagiarists, but rather that they have not been sufficiently exposed to and adequately prepared for the conventions of American academic writing.

What I offer here is a proposal for exactly what the title suggests – *Celebrating Citation* – rather than presenting it as an offensive, criminal act for prosecution. Each semester that I teach English courses, I dedicate particular class sessions to celebrating citation. I tell the students, in advance, that we will have a *Celebrate Citation* party, although they do not appreciate this until they walk in the classroom on the assigned day and see balloons, signs, cookies, and other treats. I begin by asking students what they think of when they hear ‘plagiarism.’ Without exception, the first response to this question is a collective classroom sigh and downtrodden faces. Next, students dutifully recite everything they have heard during orientation. Some even offer tales from their secondary schools about scary stories of students who ‘got caught’. Always, however, the tone is negative and couched in a framework of shame, lies, and deception. Students who plagiarize are bad. Period.

The next segment of the class transitions to positivity. I remind the students that while it is critical for them to always remember the dire consequences of violating the academic integrity code, there are many, many positive aspects of incorporating sources into their writing. As a class, we brainstorm these points – it strengthens their writing, it provides support, they are not experts and therefore it helps to have an authority substantiating their claims, etc. While students typically experience some ‘ah ha!’ moments during this brainstorming phase, many other students are perplexed at the nuanced conventions of American academic writing. In addition to source attribution, students are constantly under the demand of being original in their thinking. *How can I be original if I am citing so many sources? Won't the professor think I have nothing new to say?* These

questions create an opening for a rich and healthy discussion of the complexities of American academic writing.

Finally, I devote the remainder of class time to ‘how to.’ I show students a number of resources that they can refer to for self-access in the future (reference citation books, the *Purdue OWL* website, other institutional writing centre websites, etc.). The homework assignment due for that class would be for students to bring in sources they were using for a particular research or writing project; therefore, they would have their own sources to be cited. I begin by asking for a lucky volunteer (‘lucky’ because the class will do his/her work for her shortly). If the student has a book, the entire class works together to find a model of how to cite a book, and this is done together. We continue through a number of examples together, attempting to cite a wide variety of sources, such as journal articles, newspapers, blogs, etc. Inevitably, this portion of the class becomes the most dynamic and engaging portion of the class. ‘Where do I put the comma?’ ‘Is there a full stop here?’ ‘Does it matter if I use italics?’ ‘How do I know when it was published?’ While some of the questions surprise me – the students were expected to enter the university with basic information literacy – I am thrilled that they are asking these ‘silly’ questions. The greatest challenge for me is not answering their questions immediately, but pushing them to find the answers to their own questions. I use a scaffolding approach by first answering the question and showing them where the answer can be found in one of their resources. By the end of class, however, students are answering all of their own questions, helping each other, and only consulting with me for final verification.

‘*Celebrate Citation*’ parties are a true form of academic empowerment for students. Students are offered the opportunity to make mistakes in a low-stakes environment; they are also introduced to resources that will serve them throughout their undergraduate years and beyond. While I recognize the concerns of academic integrity violations that echo around campus, I encourage educators to adopt a more direct, instructive approach to preventing the pitfalls of plagiarism.

## In response to ‘Celebrate Citation: Flipping the Pedagogy of Plagiarism in Qatar’

Philippa Armitage, Centre for Learning Excellence, University of Bedfordshire

In her article Molly McHarg makes several points that I agree with, particularly that for the majority of students the plagiarism is not deliberate but is due to a lack of understanding of how to reference correctly.

I like her approach to citation as a celebration which focuses on the positive points and reasons why students should reference. I think that most students would not

want anyone else to use their work without acknowledgement.

At the University of Bedfordshire there is a policy in place to address all forms of academic offence, not just plagiarism. However, in dealing with plagiarism the policy does differentiate between the seriousness of the plagiarism that has occurred. For students early in their studies where the issue is a first offence, these students

will be given guidance to show them how to ensure that they are able to reference correctly and therefore avoid plagiarism. It is important that these issues are picked up and addressed early, because not doing so could mean that a student is not aware of the problem until it is picked up later in their studies, possibly at the time of submitting their project where the issue is likely to be greater and to be seen as a more serious offence. The excuse that 'It is a first offence, all my other work has been referenced correctly' is not really acceptable, as if a student has shown a capability of referencing correctly in previous work, there is no reason why they should then plagiarise, as they have shown an understanding of how to reference.

The two main issues that appear through an apparent lack of understanding, other than not knowing how to reference, are the use of large sections of text copied from a source (with or without reference). This is usually seen in the work of a student for whom English is not his/her first language. The student feels that if s/he try to paraphrase the author they will not be able to say it correctly, and may lose the meaning of the text.

The other issue is lack of understanding of what paraphrasing is. We often see work where the student believes that they are paraphrasing and referencing the work of another author, but in fact they are copying the work (words and ideas) of that author, and then just

changing a few of the words within the text (for example *frequently* is changed for *often*, and *quickly* is changed to *rapidly*). Often a citation is included at the end of the copied text, but as the majority of the text is taken exactly from the source, quotations would be more appropriate. Therefore the citation is not the correct form of referencing and so it is flagged up by the Turnitin software as similar text. The students understand paraphrasing as writing the text in their own words. They believe that changing one word for another, thus using some different words to the author, means that it is written in their own words. It may help the students to see that paraphrasing will also show their understanding of the text that they are discussing. Good paraphrasing will show that they understand the meaning of the text rather than just show their ability to copy the text with some word changes.

The *Academic Discipline Policy* at the University of Bedfordshire does try to address the issue of whether an offence is deliberate, or is due to lack of understanding. The aim of the policy is to ensure that cases where there is evidence that the student knowingly plagiarised their work are seen by the Academic Conduct Panel, and that for cases where it appears that the issue is due to lack of understanding the student is given the support and guidance to help them to understand so that they do not make the same mistake again.

## Citation Matters: Two Essays on the Student Journey of Citation and How Google Scholar and the Principle of Least Effort Can Affect Academic Writing

Avtar Natt, University Library, University of Bedfordshire

### Abstract

The paper consists of two short essays on citation matters. The aim is to get the academy thinking about citing and referencing from a student point of view. The first essay (on the student journey of citation) is an attempt of a framework for the academic writer, from the time they are an undergraduate student to an academic researcher. The worldview of citing and referencing is argued to develop in accordance to academic level. The second essay is on academic writing and the principle of least effort. With a few searches on Google Scholar, cyberplagiarism and the pilfering of citation context was demonstrated. With emphasis on patchwriting, the temptation of the academic writer to corner cut is not argued as being exclusive to students but more apparent by students. Technology is also argued to create a conflict for the academic writer showing a path where they can reduce effort.

**Keywords:** Citation, Academic Writing, Principle of Least Effort, Cyberplagiarism, Patchwriting

### Introduction

It is the attempt to combine two research interests that gets me here. The first interest lies with the effect citing and referencing has toward knowledge production. After all the references academic writers use and the

context in which they cite prior work must have an effect on the end product. Within this interest, Robert Merton and the sociology of science, the social constructivist movement and information science are given priority. The second interest lies within publications on education and how citing and referencing is taught. Issues surrounding the role of technology, plagiarism and resulting academic writing styles is given priority. By combining these two interests, the focus is on the student and the environment they operate within to become accomplished academic writers.

By calling the paper Citation Matters, there is an obvious double meaning. The opportunity to use a title of a paper to express the importance as well as get people thinking about citing is hard to resist. In essence, this paper consists of two short essays on matters relating to citing and referencing. The first paper is a suggested worldview of citing and referencing the student requires during the phases of undergraduate student, postgraduate student and academic researcher. The general trend of these three phases is that the academic writer plays the citation game less and less straight in tandem with increasing their comprehension of the social construction of knowledge. The second essay consists of a demonstration via Google Scholar of how



easy it is to plagiarise from the internet. With a few simple searches, enough content was found on Google Scholar to not only pilfer ideas but to potentially spare an academic writer from reading a text by relying on the resulting citations. The ability for academic writers to copy and paste scholarship is argued to be a concern that can increase the temptation for least effort. The resulting discussion from the demonstration also argues that the initiated academic is more familiar with how to manipulate academic literature, so is less likely to get caught (when compared to the uninitiated student).

## 1. The Student Journey of Citation

### Premise

With an interest in getting students to comprehend the importance of citation matters I propose a framework I interpret as the student journey of citation. The framework is broken down into three phases in line with a student progressing from undergraduate to postgraduate to academic researcher. Differences in academic discipline is acknowledged but considered extraneous because the focus is on a student progressing by academic level. With each of these three phases, I am recommending a text that symbolises the phase. The small number of references is intentional, as the aim is for the readership to consider reading the references for themselves.

To elaborate on what I am meaning by a student journey of citation, I am referring to the (point in time) worldview of citation practice a student should realise as an undergraduate student, postgraduate student and as a researcher. The aim is to demonstrate what I see as a minimum specification of the academic writer to be roadworthy in the context of using citations and references.

### Phase 1: The Undergraduate Student

Recommended Text:

Merton, R. K. (1983) 'Foreword' In Garfield, E., *Citation Indexing – Its Theory and Application in Science, Technology, and Humanities*, Philadelphia: ISI Press, pp. v-ix.

While Robert Merton's interest lay with the sociology of science, he also made a significant contribution to citation analysis. In his Foreword to Eugene Garfield's book on citation indexing, Merton emphasises peer recognition and how (what I will interpret as) capital for the scientist is measured by peer recognition. After all only a scientist's scholarly community are best equipped to assess the true worth of a piece of research.

When considering the student journey of citation the following quote best sums things up:

*'Citations and references thus operate within a jointly cognitive and moral framework. In their cognitive aspect, they are designed to provide the historical lineage of knowledge and to guide readers of new work to sources they may want to check or draw upon for themselves. In their moral aspect, they are designed to repay intellectual debts in the only form in which this can*

*be done: through open acknowledgement of them.'* (Merton, 1983, p.vi)

Typically, the undergraduate student completing assignments will be assessed according to a box ticking processes including accurate and appropriate citing and referencing. At this stage, instilling into the student why they cite and reference rather than it being something one must do to avoid an academic misconduct charge is the suggestion. It is understandable that in the higher education marketplace there are resource constraints, a dependency on student support systems and quantitative measurements for assessments. Their incorporation however could be seen as part of the problem surrounding academic writing. Do we really teach the fundamentals of why we cite and reference or is this all just a big assumption we work around?

Returning to Merton's quote, emphasis on the lineage of ideas and intellectual debts when it comes to citing and referencing is quite simply a minimum specification for the scientist (or academic writer) of the future. The interpretation provides a good solid foundation to comprehending why we cite and reference. Merton's interpretation is not immune from criticism and it can be seen as idealistic and incompatible compared to the current citing and referencing practices that go on. Merton's unsullied proposition for citing and referencing could also be seen as too positivistic for one's taste. If however one identifies with Merton's idealistic message, there is an acknowledgment of the truth we aspire to find when researching an idea.

### Phase 2: The Postgraduate Student

Recommended Text:

Small, H. G. (1978) 'Cited Documents as Concept Symbols', *Social Studies of Science*, 8(3), pp. 327-340.

Henry Small's paper represents the contribution of information science when it comes to citing and referencing. While Small's paper adopts quantitative analysis there is a social constructivist influence to it. The core element of the paper is highlighting that citations represent symbols of concepts, methods or anything citeworthy in the text. 'This leads to the citing of works which embody ideas the author is discussing. The cited documents become, then, in a more general sense, 'symbols' for these ideas.' (Small, 1978, p.328). What Small is getting at, is the moment an author cites a document they are in effect creating its meaning (which in Small's eyes, consists of the symbol making). Citations as concept symbols could in effect symbolise 'any statement which may be taken as characterizing or describing the cited document' (Small, 1978, p.329). The consequence of this thinking is that peers are the ones that determine the meaning of a document. So as an example, Merton (1983) in a paper by Author A in 1984 could be cited as an interpretation of citing and referencing in line with the times. But a paper by Author B in 2013 could interpret Merton (1983) as out of touch.

When associating Small's paper with students and citation practice, I propose that the idea of citations as

concept symbols be seen as a deployment tactic for any student doing original assignments. While this type of assignment is typically representative of postgraduate assignments there is also applicability for undergraduate dissertation students and such like. Both Merton and Small's interpretation need to be considered in conjunction with each other but Small's deployment tactic could be seen as a progression from the more defensive stance of Merton. For assessments, the box ticking is still going on, the citing and referencing still needs to be tip-top but the progression is in the level of independence and citation evaluation the writer needs to have. By using a citation as a concept symbol, the aim is also to promote interpretation and evaluation of ideas into one's own words and not just filling space with quotations. Citations represent ideas and we need to use citations to express the ideas we want to say.

### Phase 3: The Academic Researcher

Recommended Text:

Latour, B. (1987) *Science in Action: How to follow scientists and engineers through society*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, pp. 21-62.

Bruno Latour's chapter on literature develops the idea of peers deciding the fate of research by acknowledging citation context, which he reframes according to positive and negative modalities. The context of a citation can put spin on a critical paper so it appears less damaging to the reader and a lesser known paper can be embellished so it appears as fact. Further still, the 'presence or the absence of references, quotations and footnotes is so much a sign that a document is serious or not that you can transform a fact into fiction or a fiction into a fact just by adding or subtracting references' (Latour, 1987, p.33).

A take on Latour's thinking is that we carve the literature of others in conjunction with our own interests to impress others when it comes to saying what we want to say. Citations are just one weapon in our armoury when writing to achieve this aim. Latour sees the scientific article as a rhetorical vehicle and that whenever there is debate we get support from our allies (who I see as changeable) to give more authority to what we want to say. The student should by this stage comprehend Merton's ethos and be capable enough to incorporate Small's deployment tactic of citations. On top of that, the student becoming an academic researcher needs to come to terms with citation context and not be blinkered to overlook the tactical game playing that occurs in scholarly communication.

*'Whatever the tactics, the general strategy is easy to grasp: do whatever you need to the former literature to render it as helpful as possible for the claims you are going to make...help your allies if they are attacked, ensure safe communications with those who supply you with indisputable instruments...oblige your enemies to fight one another...if you are not sure of winning, be humble and understated.'* (Latour, 1987, pp.37-38)

An example of tactical citation practice is what Latour refers to as the perfunctory citation, where citations by an author can infiltrate a pre-existing citation network (also known as a citation circle). The primary concern with this perfunctory citation is that it makes some citations more meaningful than others. In an age of evaluation metrics based on citation practice, the perfunctory citation risks downgrading the citation from a representation of an idea to that of a tradable commodity. Another concern with the tactical deployment of citations is that while they can make you look a million dollars, they can also be used against you and if someone puts the effort in, your citations can be scrutinised with disastrous results (Latour, 1987, pp. 33)

Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory (ANT) may not be for everyone but as an individual chapter it is a great guide in informing the researcher of the future one form of how the scholarly communication game is played. Latour's writing in this chapter comes across as militaristic but in doing so, the message is pretty clear: Use the work of peers and anything else at your disposal to say what you want to say but prepare yourself if there is a worthy opponent.

### Final Thoughts

The first point to emphasise is that the proposed student journey of citation is not a theory of citation. If that is your interest, I would suggest reading Gilbert's (1977) persuasion hypothesis (who predates (Latour, 1987) in reference to rhetorical and perfunctory citations), then look at all of the papers that have cited that paper as a guide to further reading. The student journey of citation is a suggested framework for the comprehension of citing and referencing the academic writer requires from the moment they start as an undergraduate student to a published academic author. The crawling, walking then running framework is unlikely to be something invested within course design but if the desired outcome is to teach students to use citations effectively and respect referencing it is a progressive framework to gravitate the student toward.

Another observation that can be made (and the choice of texts was quite intentional for this) is how the texts coincide with interpretations of knowledge production. There is a progression from Merton's sociology of science laying emphasis on peer recognition, to Henry Small combining information science and social constructivism to Latour's progression of social constructivism to Actor Network Theory. The principled nature of citing and referencing looks to have morphed into a 'peculiar trade in a merciless world' (Latour, 1987, p.60) where gamesmanship and rhetoric are key. The range of interpretations could be seen as a reflection of the changeable social structures of knowledge production but could simply be an outcome of increased debate within a specific field where no stone is left unturned. There are also practical considerations to consider. We don't always have the time and means to read and reflect on everything we want but we do manage to make the time and means to read what we need and say what we want to say. If we don't do that

for academic writing, we could be there forever, getting lost in tangents, considering ifs and buts to protect ourselves from the same peers we seek approval from.

## 2. Academic Writing and the Principle of Least Effort – Supported by Some Thoughts on Cyberplagiarism, Patchwriting and Google Scholar

### Premise

The proposition is that in current times Google Scholar can be used by academic writers as a tool to corner cut and reduce effort. Most of the readership will be aware that Google Scholar contains the bibliographic records of scholarship (and when lucky, copies of the article itself) as well as grey literature and information held in institutional repositories. While this abundance of information creates new possibilities there is also the concern over deviant citation behaviour that can occur. To test my contention, I will demonstrate how easy it is to cyberplagiarise and take the citation context off a paper.

### Some Definitions

Before the demonstration I would like to clear up a few definitions.

By cyberplagiarism (or cyber plagiarism, also referred to as Digital plagiarism (Barrie and Presti, 2000)) I am referring to the relationship between information on the internet and a consequential type of plagiarism behaviour. Those involved with assessments will no doubt identify with the authors arguing that the ease of information on the internet has led to the rise in plagiarism (Eysenbach (2000); Kralik (2003); Pupovac, Bilic-Zulle and Petroveci (2008); Szabo and Underwood (2004)). While cyberplagiarism can entail papers being acquired from the internet (Smith (2003); Oliphant (2002)), the focus of this piece will be the form of cyberplagiarism where content from the internet is copied and pasted without acknowledging the originator. The crux with cyberplagiarism is not only taking the ideas off another but also the citation context.

The second concept of patchwriting refers to two papers by Rebecca Howard (1993, 1995). Howard (1993, p. 233), defines patchwriting as ‘copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one-for-one synonym substitutes’. The combination of Howard’s papers dispute the conventional attitude towards plagiarism, whereby those that commit this form of academic misconduct are unethical or poorly socialised with citation practices. Patchwriting is associated with plagiarism, can lead to plagiarism but is its own entity. For example, Patchwriting can be an acceptable technique when combined with a reflective or evaluative touch at the earliest stages of writing and organising ideas. It is just that patchwriting can be unacceptable when it is just glossing over the pilfering of texts. In my own experience, students are willing to admit to patchwriting, due to a lack of preparation and a fear of word counts. Furthermore, students informally

confess to a complete misinterpretation of paraphrasing and assume that citing a text once is free reign to use whole chunks of the cited text. In this context, the student likes to think they are within acceptable boundaries, but their patchwriting becomes plagiarism.

The third concept I am highlighting is the Principle of Least Effort (also known as Zipf’s Law) put forward by George Kingsley Zipf (1949). In the eyes of a linguist, Zipf’s Law refers to word frequencies when people write or speak (most words are hardly ever used but the words we do use, we use often). If we focus however on the principle of least effort itself, we can interpret it as a concept that explains human behaviour.

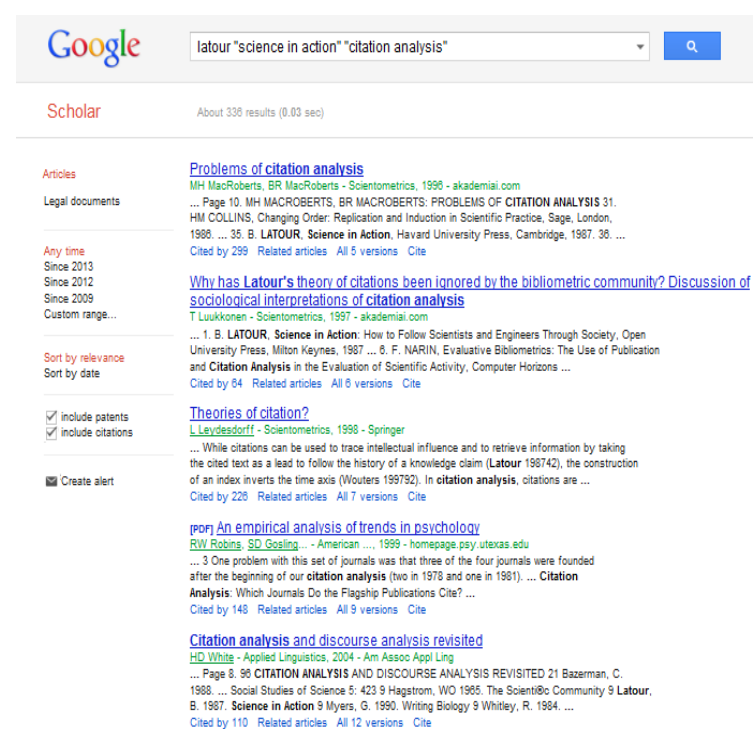
*‘In simple terms, the Principle of Least Effort means, for example, that a person in solving his immediate problems will view these against the background of his probable future problems, as estimated by himself. Moreover he will strive to solve his problems in such a way as to minimize the total work that he must expend in solving both his immediate problems and his probable future problems.’ (Zipf, 2012, p.1)*

Thus if one is a student just expecting to pass a course in higher education (the reasons why at this point are extraneous and varied), taking a path where there is less effort spent to meet this outcome is understandable.

### Demonstration

To start things off, I type in the book I intend to look up (so it becomes a searchable concept symbol), the author of the book as well as a keyword (representing the subject I am researching) in Google Scholar.

**Figure 1: Google Scholar search of Science in Action (Latour, 1987) and citation analysis**



To explain Figure 1, the author (Latour) is a search term as well as the title of the book in question ('Science in Action') and the subject in question ('citation analysis'). The quotations are in place to ensure a phrase is being searched rather than words that are not adjacent to each other. This search is intentionally structured in a way so Google Scholar retrieves any mention of Bruno Latour's Science in Action as well as 'citation analysis' being mentioned anywhere in the text. At the time of this demonstration (May 2013), I retrieved 336 results. The top five results according to Google Scholar make up Figure 1.

The results in Figure 1 satisfy my aim in retrieving citations of Science in Action as well as containing some mention of citation analysis (which is a gamble as I have not included synonyms). Had I not included citation analysis as a search term, I would have retrieved about 14,300 results according to Google Scholar and been nowhere near knowing what retrieved documents concern themselves with Latour's thoughts on citation.

To demonstrate cyberplagiarism I will look within the papers of Figure 1, use CTRL + F and provide samples of citation context where Latour (plus the publication year of the appropriate text) was mentioned:

*'As Latour further indicates, citations are not put in papers to indicate to others who has influenced the production of the work but to display the 'black boxed' (established) knowledge. If one does not agree with a referenced statement, one must, in essence, dispute it with the cited definitive authority.'* (MacRoberts and MacRoberts, 1996, p. 441)

*'Latour's views, similar to those within the various new perspectives in the sociology of scientific knowledge, emphasise that the boundaries between the social and technical in scientific practice are blurry. Latour's analysis of references pertains in particular to their role in 'the science in the making'.* (Luukkonen, 1997, p.29)

*'Latour makes understandable the heterogeneous and apparently chaotic picture of the actual use of citations. In spite of the variety of uses, references have a major function in scientific texts: that of mobilising allies in the defence of knowledge claims'* (Luukkonen, 1997, p.29)

*'Latour's view of the role of references (citations) in scientific texts is related to a theory of construction of scientific knowledge, a process in which scientific controversies are settled and knowledge claims are turned into facts. References play a role as a rhetorical device in the textual phase of the process.'* (Luukkonen, 1997, p.30)

*'Others (e.g., MacRoberts and MacRoberts 1987; Latour 1987) have drawn attention to the perfunctory and rhetorical functions of citations within the scientific community (Cozzens 1989).'* (Leydesdorff, 1998, pp. 6)

*'Latour (1987) treats references as resources for persuasion rather like battalions. But he warns that their*

*force may vanish if readers actually read what authors cite...Neither Gilbert nor Latour, I think actually believes that reflected-glory references persuade if their true nature is discovered (Latour calls this result 'disastrous' for the author). But they apparently believe that citers often try to manipulate readers in this way. Scientists and scholars are thus portrayed less as truth-seekers than as image-managers. Such a portrayal is controversial, to say the least.'* (White, 2004, p. 109)

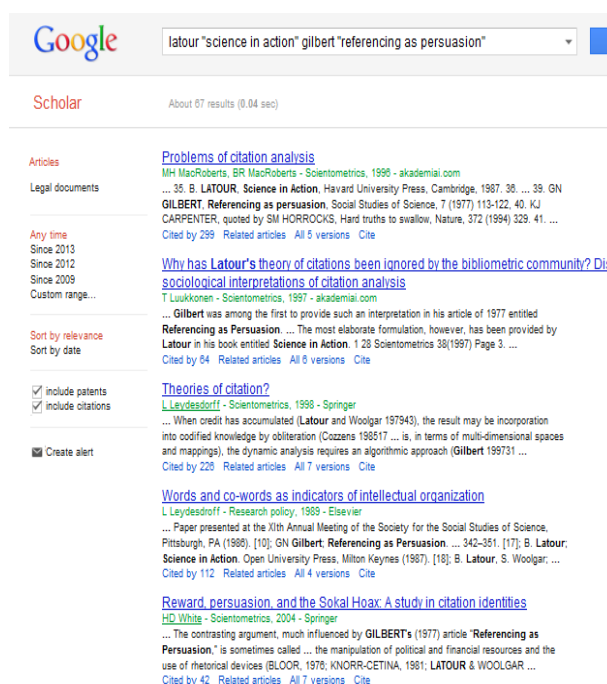
Out of the five references in Figure 1, only Robins, Gosling and Craik (1999) was unsuitable for this exercise. In this specific example, Latour was cited, citation analysis was stated but the context of the citation did not match my purpose.

At this point I am proposing that the sum of Macroberts and Macroberts (1996), Luukkonen (1997), Leydesdorff (1998) and White (2004) gives me not only enough ammunition to spare me from having to read Chapter 1 of Science in Action (that concerns itself on literature) but also provide me with a set of papers critiquing the same chapter. An interesting comparison for the reader could be to compare the aforementioned quotes with my own interpretation of Latour in the student journey of citation essay (I can assure you, I have read the book and wrote this essay after the essay on the student journey of citation). If we now consider the amount of freely available (but not necessarily copyright cleared) scholarship that is available via Google Scholar, an individual could potentially take the citation context of an article, book or thesis and be able to comprehend it without ever reading it. In other words, one could incorporate the ammunition above (even dropping the odd direct quote from Latour) and portray the critique and legwork to be their own, as none of the other authors are cited. The authors are only used for their citation context.

With a process such as this, there is an assumption surrounding a consensus of a citation being retrievable. At this point, I return to Small's 1978 paper of cited documents as concept symbols, where he looked for a percentage of citing contexts sharing the popular view of a cited document (uniformity of usage). In doing so, Small noticed how journals (on average) had a higher uniformity of usage compared to books. This trend is hardly a surprise as books cover more ground than a journal article but what it gets me thinking about is the importance of using appropriate concept symbols in Google Scholar to retrieve a relevant sample for analysis.

I return to Google Scholar.

**Figure 2: Google Scholar co-citation search of Latour (1987) and Gilbert (1977)**



For figure 2, I opted with co-citation (papers citing two papers I consider seminal for my purpose; in this instance those by Latour (1987) and Gilbert (1977)) as a retrieval strategy. Figure 2 is an attempt to retrieve papers concerned with the persuasion hypothesis (Gilbert, 1977) and Latour's thoughts on citation. Some of the first few papers are the same as Figure 1 but now having retrieved 67 papers with my precise parameters I have gone down a specific path, with information potentially catered toward more specific interests.

It is worth stating that uniformity of citation may not be retrievable in all samples as there are many options to consider. What is comprehensible is that obtaining the uniform use of a citation can potentially be retrieved with the correct strategy and if there is enough (but not too much) scholarship out there. Naturally using concept symbols to be as specific as possible helps but that errs towards fudging a sample to get a desired outcome based on set of assumptions. Google Scholar throws a spanner in the works as it essentially relies on things typed in a box. My own experience of using the platform to look at the context of a concept symbol found many chance occurrences with no relevance when looking at the results qualitatively (Natt, 2013).

## Discussion

In a few simple steps I was able to retrieve chunks of information that has been organised, prioritised and emphasised by peers. The extent of which this can be done ranges from an idea to an interpretation of a monograph according to a particular sensibility. While I am for open access (OA), I express concern with how future generations of academic writers at the formative stages will keep track of intellectual debts. There is a risk of a realignment of acceptable citation practice and a

generation of academic writers pilfering the contextual citations of peers to reduce effort and get away with it. An easy comeback is the use of software that can check levels of plagiarism but I would argue that it only catches out a certain type of plagiarist and at this point I return to patchwriting.

Howard's (1993, p.236) opinion of patchwriting is that of 'a healthy effort to gain membership in a new culture' (which one could consider as academia). Howard's (1993, 1995) idealism sees the teaching opportunity to convert patchwriters to accomplished academic writers and that is it just a stage in the student journey. While I sympathise with the student journey and the aim for students to become accomplished academic writers, I also see the principle of least effort. So if a student instead of reading, reflecting then writing is instead cramming, not making use of summary writing and producing their output in the last minute, it produces a different kind of output as well as increase the likelihood of corner cutting.

My own take on patchwriting is that it provides an opportunity to reframe the doom and gloom that surrounds discussion on plagiarism. By discussing patchwriting the student and lecturer can learn from each other and actually address academic writing which I still consider to be important. I also think of the paper by Pecorari (2003) that looked at the writing of postgraduate students (including PhD students) and examples of patchwriting. If the researchers of tomorrow are 'at it' what is there to say that the researchers of today are not? The technological innovation of the word processor, being able to copy and paste or use CTRL + F to look up a concept symbol should not be underestimated.

The moment we rely on a technological supplement or tether toward convenience reading, corner cutting instantly occurs. Only the purist and most classically trained are not 'at it'. Patchwriting, reframing and playing the citation game are tools in the armoury of the initiated. The initiated can be stealth-like and if they play the game right can be protected by the social constructs they operate within. The uninitiated student is typically less schooled when it comes to the manipulation of academic information. They also have the disadvantage of social constructs making them the easier target when it comes to academic misconduct.

## Implications

Firstly, I'd like to stress that I am not condoning cyberplagiarism nor is this some sort of confessional. I am condemning cyberplagiarism and the demonstration is an attempt to acknowledge the elephant in the room and express concern with normative citation practice. It is easy to pin plagiarism on the internet or the lowering of academic standards but while there is some validity with such judgements, there are other considerations. What I would like to emphasise is how the longer one operates within the social constructs of academia, the more socialised one becomes to not only produce quality work but to potentially corner cut and get away

with it. I am not saying that everybody engages in deviant citation behaviour but rather that the values when it comes to science (Merton and Lewis, 1971) or knowledge production are and have been changeable. We do not bat straight all of the time. We bat straight enough and know when to play across the line. It gives us free reign to have the odd slog now and then, thinking it is absolutely normal.

Technology and citation behaviour is one example of this change in values and while Google Scholar has the potential to look at a concept symbol within a paper, there is the issue of where the information comes from and how it is ranked. Open Access adds to this issue and with the information being easier to obtain, it is also easier to manipulate. Thinking back to Carr's (2008) article on Google and the change in human cognition, I propose that the relationship between technology and effort can create a conflict for the academic writer. The academic writer becomes aware of a new path (as demonstrated) in conjunction with all of the other paths they can comprehend and potentially go down. Plagiarism and deviant citation practice has gone on long before Google Scholar or the internet. It is just that this new path brought about by technology in conjunction with the ever expanding amount of scholarship can be counterproductive and result in behaviour associated with least effort rather than efficiency.

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